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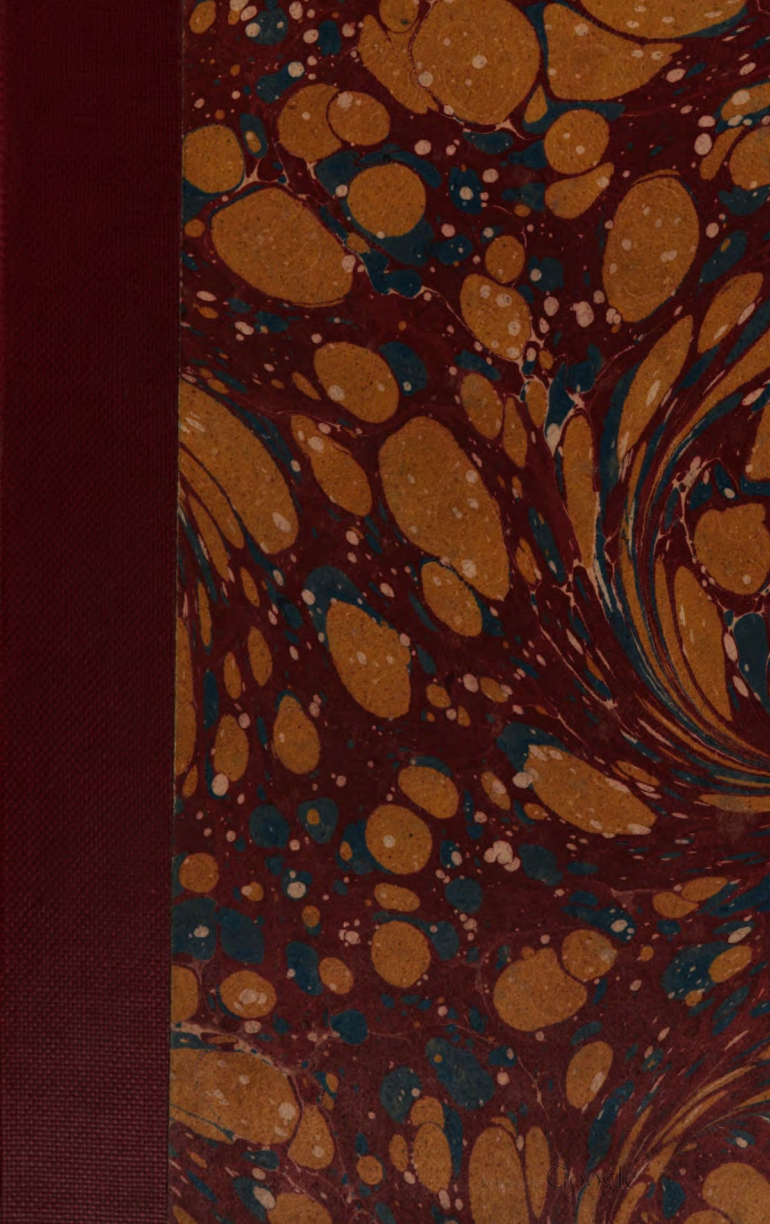
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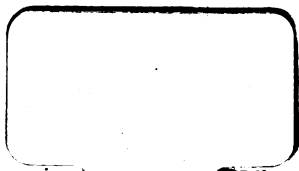
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Vet. Ital. IV A. 67



PICTURES FROM DANTE,

IN THE VERSION OF WRIGHT:

SELECTED BY THE TRANSLATOR.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, ORME, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMAN.
1844.




PREFACE



THE work from which the following extracts are made having been published hitherto in an expensive form, the Translator, on preparing a new edition, is desirous to remove previously, some of the many prejudices which exist with respect to Dante.

This object he hopes may in some measure be accomplished by the present volume; and with the view of correcting one of the errors alluded to—viz, that Dante is a dealer only in the dark and the doleful—the selections are made to commence with the Paradiso.

The title of the volume will not surprise the lovers of Dante,—who well know, that if he is great as a Poet, he is equally so as a Painter. His Pictures too, are for the most part easily removed from their Gallery; and are of so varied a character as to adapt themselves equally to the admirers of Claude and of Salvator Rosa.



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PICTURES FROM DANTE.

PARADISO.

A FIRST VIEW OF HEAVEN.

SUDDENLY day seem'd added unto day ;
As though another sun had in the skies
Been set by Him who rules with boundless sway.

THE SAME.

THE sun so lighted up the heaven, that ne'er
Did lake, augmented or by flood or rain,
Of such a broad and vast expanse appear.

THE LAW OF THE UNIVERSE.

WITH pitying sigh her eyes on me were thrown ;
And her's was like a mother's gaze, intent
Upon the face of her delirious son.
She then began : " A certain Order reigns
Throughout Creation's ample space ; and this
The world in likeness unto God sustains.
Herein the higher creatures see display'd
The trace of the Eternal Might, that is
The end for which such ordinance was made.
All natures to this heavenly law incline,
Approaching each according to their kind,
Some more, some less, unto the Source Divine.
Hence move they on unto their different ends
Through the great sea of being—each design'd
To reach the port tow'rds which its instinct tends."

TEMPTATION.

'Tis true, that oft as from the artist's hand
A form proceeds, not answering his design,
Because the matter hears not his command ;—
So will the creature, moved by adverse force,
Being free to stand or fall, sometimes decline,
And swerve, thus tempted, from the appointed
course.

DANTE'S ADVENTUROUS VOYAGE.

O YE who fain would listen to my song,
Following in little bark full eagerly
My venturous ship, that chaunting hies along,
Turn back unto your native shores again ;
Tempt not the deep, lest haply losing me,
In unknown paths bewilder'd ye remain.
Ye other few, who have look'd up on high
For Angels' food betimes, e'en here supplied
Largely, but not enough to satisfy,—

Mid the deep ocean ye your course may take,
My track pursuing the pure waters through,
Ere reunites the quickly closing wake.

THE SOUL OF THE UNIVERSE.

AND as the soul within your clay confined
Pervades the several members of the frame,
Which unto various functions are assign'd ;
Thus doth Intelligence with goodness fill
The orbs of heaven ;—though multiplied, the same ;
On its own Unity revolving still.
Each different Virtue forms a different union
With that fair star enliven'd by its beams,
As soul and body hold in you communion.
Shines through each orb the influence diversely,
Sway'd by the joyous nature whence it streams,
Like gladness through the pupil of the eye.

CHARITY IN HEAVEN.

SHE smiled ;—her smile the other spirits caught,
And answering me, a look so joyous wore,
As though the Primal Love that flame had wrought.
“ O brother, Charity so calms our will,—
We know not what it is to thirst for more ;
And full contentment every heart doth fill.
To loftier region did we wish to rise,
Our wishes would with His discordant be,
Who for our portion gives these lower skies :—
Which may not be, if thou consider well
The real nature of the charity
Wherein 'tis here our destiny to dwell.
Thus 'tis essential to this state of bliss
To keep our wills within the will divine,
That ours may be identified with His ;
And hence, though divers are the seats we fill,
Each is as pleased as is the King benign,
Who moulds our hearts according to His will.

Our peace is in His will—that ocean vast,
Whither all creatures tend—both those that He
Creates, and those by plastic nature cast.”
Then was it clear to me that every place
In heaven is Paradise ;—though different be
The appointed measure of the heavenly grace.

.

Thus she address'd me—then began to sing,
“Ave Maria,” vanishing from view,—
As through deep water sinks some heavy thing.

DOUBT.

BETWEEN two viands equidistant placed,
And tempting equally, a man might die
Of hunger, ere determined which to taste :
So might a lamb between the cravings stand
Of two fierce wolves, and fear them equally ;
So might a dog—a kid on either hand.

SCRIPTURE ADAPTED TO HUMAN
CAPACITY.

THUS must your understanding be address ;
Since solely now by Sense is apprehended
That which hereafter Intellect will test.
To your capacity thus condescends
Scripture, to God ascribing hands and feet,
Though nought approaching to them it intends.

GRATITUDE.

DEPTH of affection have I not, that may
Sufficient be thy favour to requite :
Let Him, who vieweth, and who can, repay.

THE MIND CONTENT IN GOD ONLY.

I SEE full well the mind can ne'er exist
Content, unless illumed by that True Light,
From which dissever'd may no truth consist.

Therein it rests, like beast within its lair,
Delighted, when 'tis reach'd ; for otherwise
All human efforts unavailing were.
And hence springs Doubt, like to a tender shoot,
At foot of Truth :—from height to height we rise ;
Since Nature ever prompteth the pursuit.

HEAVENLY WISDOM.

IF wrapt in Love's extatic flame, I glow
With splendour, not conceived by mortal eye,
So that thy powers of vision I o'erthrow,
Be not amazed ; for this effect proceeds
From perfect view of the Divinity,
Who, nearer seen, to love intenser leads.
Within thy mind now kindled are the fires
Of the eternal Sun—whose beauteous face
But once beheld, for ever love inspires :

And if aught else entice thy love astray,
'Tis but some faint misapprehended trace
Of that same Light, transmitting here its ray.

JOY IN HEAVEN ON THE ARRIVAL OF
A NEW GUEST.

AND as an arrow to the mark is driven,
Or ere the cord that sent it be at rest,
So swiftly pass'd we to the second heaven.
Enter'd within the precincts of the light,
I saw my Lady's countenance possess
With joy so great, the planet glow'd more bright :
And if the very star a smile display'd,
Well might I smile—to change by nature prone,
And varying still with each impression made.
As in some water that is smooth and clear
The fish are drawn to ought within it thrown
So as to make it like their food appear;

Thus saw I more than thousand splendours move
Tow'rds us, and every one was heard to say,
"Behold one here, who will increase our love."
And as each soul approach'd us, the delight
It felt, was manifested by the ray
That from within was cast upon my sight.

A SIMILE.

AND as the sun conceals himself from view
Amid the splendour of the new-born day,
When it hath chased away the early dew ;
E'en so that holy form himself conceal'd
Within the lustre of his own pure ray ;
And, shrouded closely, to mine ear reveal'd
Words that the ensuing canto shall display.

THE PROGRESS OF THE ROMAN
EMPIRE.

THAT thou may'st see how great the blame of those
Who move against the sacred standard—first,
Those who are ranged beneath it,—next, its foes.
Behold through many a day what deeds renown'd
Have made it rev'renced, from the hour when erst
Young Pallas died, its sovereignty to found.
Thou knowest that in Alba it remain'd
Three hundred years and more, until the time
When three opposed to three the fight sustain'd.
And from the Sabine rape, unto the day
Lucretia wept, thou know'st its deeds sublime,—
Bending the neighbouring people to its sway :
Thou knowest what by Roman worth it wrought
'Gainst Brennus, and 'gainst Pyrrhus, and the rest,
Chiefs and confederates who with valour fought :
Torquatus whence and Cincinnatus (name
Renown'd for aye) and those compatriots blest,
The Decii and the Fabii, won their fame.

Down to the ground it brought the Arabians' pride,
Who in the train of Hannibal pass'd o'er
The Alpine rocks, whence Padus' waters glide :
Beneath it, triumph'd in their early prime
Scipio and Pompey :—rudely too it bore
Against the hill, which thou, a boy, didst climb.
Then, near the time when it was will'd by heaven
That all the earth should hold one peaceful reign,
To Cæsar's hand, by Rome's command, 'twas given.
Its glorious deeds from Var unto the Rhine
Iser beheld, and Era, and the Seine,
And all the vales that tow'rds the Rhone incline.
And when, Ravenna leaving, at a bound
It clear'd the Rubicon, it took such flight
Nor tongue nor pen its glory may resound.
Hence it directed back its troops to Spain ;
Then to Durazzo turn'd, and so did smite
Pharsalia, that the glowing Nile felt pain.
To Simois and Antandros back its way
It sped, and there where Hector lies at rest ;
And shook its wings to Ptolemy's dismay.

Thundering, it thence on Juba bent its arms ;
Then turning back revisited your west,
Where Pompey's trumpet sounded forth alarms.
Of what he did who next the ensign bore,
Brutus and Cassius bark in hell ; and thence
Modona and Perugia trembled sore.
Mourns Cleopatra still with grievous throes,
Who, hastening to avoid its violence,
A dark and fearful death untimely chose.
With him it ran e'en to the Red Sea's shore ;
With him it hush'd the world into a rest
So deep, that closed was Janus' sacred door.
But all the glories that had yet been gain'd,
Or were to be, beneath that standard blest,
Throughout the mortal realm o'er which it reign'd,
Sink into nothing, and become obscure,
If in Tiberias' hands its acts be scann'd
With eye acute, and with affection pure.
For the just God, who doth my words inspire,
Assign'd the mighty task unto his hand
To execute the vengeance of His ire.

Now let my words thy admiration win ;—
With Titus next it hasten'd on to bring
Vengeance for vengeance of the ancient sin :
And when in time the Lombard tusk had gored
The sacred Church—beneath its sheltering wing
Victorious Charlemagne her rights restored.

ROMĒO.

FOUR daughters, and each one of them a Queen,
Had Raymond Berenger :—this grandeur all
By poor Romēo had accomplished been.
Yet, moved by slanderous tongues of evil men,
To strict account this Just One did he call,
Who render'd back full twelve for every ten.
He left the palace, worn with age and poor :
And did the world but know how he sustain'd
His hardships, begging crusts from door to door,
Still greater glory had his virtue gain'd.

BEATRICE.

BUT with that reverential awe imbued,
Which all the letters of her name inspire,
I bow'd to earth, like one by sleep subdued.
Nor long remain'd I so:—for with a smile
That would have comforted one wrapt by fire
Did Beatrice my terror thus beguile.

DIFFERENT DISPOSITIONS.

THWARTED by fortune, Nature never thrives,
Stunted in growth, like every other seed
That 'gainst an uncongenial climate strives:
And did unthinking mortals upon earth
To Nature's everlasting rules give heed,
There would be no complaint of lack of worth:
But him most suited unto war, ye teach
His wit to sharpen in religion's cause;
And make a king of him most fit to preach;
Reversing nature's fundamental laws.

BEATRICE.

THE tranquil eyes of Beatrice, intent
Upon me as before, with fond delight,
Gave to my wish untold a kind assent.

THE WONDER OF THE CREATION.

VIEWING his offspring with that fervent love
Which ever from the Sire and Son proceeds,
The First Great Cause of all below—above—
Hath in such perfect order wrought the whole,
That he who contemplates these wonders, needs
Must feel the Godhead thrill his inmost soul.

DEVOTION.

NEVER was heart of man so wholly brought
Through heavenly love and through desire unmix'd
To render up to God its every thought,

As I, soon as these words my bosom thrill'd ;
And all my affection was on Him so fix'd,
That Beatrice no more my spirit fill'd.

A SIMILE.

LADIES they seem'd, not from the dance set free,
But pausing for new notes,—with fond desire,
Until they catch them, listening silently.

THE CALL TO PRAYER.

THEN, like a clock that summons us away,
What time the Spouse of God at matin hour
Hastes to her Husband, for his love to pray,—
And one part urges on the other, sounding
Tin Tin in notes so sweet, that by its power
The soul is thrill'd, with pious love abounding ;

So I beheld that glorious circle move ;
And with such sweet accord and harmony
Take up the song of praise, as none may prove,
Save where is joy through all eternity.”

WORLDLINESS.

O THE insensate labour men bestow
On worldly things!—how weak those reasonings are
Which make them stoop their wings to earth below.
One was pursuing medicine,—one a course
Of law ;—the Church employ’d another’s care ;
One strove to rule by sophistry or force :
One was on wicked gains by fraud intent ;
By merchandise another ; this one given
To fleshly joys, on ease another bent ;—
When I, from all these earthly cares relieved,
With Beatrice ascending into heaven,
Was in that sphere so gloriously received.

FALLIBILITY OF HUMAN EXPECTATION.

FOR I have seen the thorn through winter snows
Look sharp and stiff—yet on a future day
High on its summit bear the tender rose :
And ship I've seen, that through the storms hath
 past,
Securely bounding o'er the watery way,
At entrance of the harbour wreck'd at last.

JOY.

As when by gladness prompted and incited,
They who keep up the dance in circling ring
Their voices raise, and movements show delighted ;
So, at that beauteous Maid's devoted prayer,
'The sacred circles, joy exhibiting,
Danced in a round, and chanting, thrill'd the air.

TO DIE IS GAIN.

HE who laments that man on earth must die
Ere he may live in heaven, hath little known
The calm refreshment of the shower on high.

GLORIFIED SPIRITS.

LONG as the joy shall last
That reigns in Paradise, so long a space
Around us shall our love this raiment cast :—
Bright in proportion to our ardour this,—
Our ardour to the vision ; and as grace
Exceedeth merit, such the vision is.
When we regain our flesh, made pure and bright,
Our persons, render'd perfect and complete,
More pleasing will become ;—since to the light,
Assign'd unto us now by God's free grace,
A greater share will then be given, that meet
We may become to look upon His face.

Wherefore the vision granted us must needs
Increase—increase the ardour glowing thence—
Increase the radiance that from it proceeds.
But as, while flame emitting, charcoal still
That flame in whiteness overcomes, and hence
Preserves its own identity ; so will
The rays, by which we now are compass'd round,
Be vanquish'd by the flesh in brilliancy—
That flesh now yonder cover'd under ground :
Nor will such rays fatigue us, as too bright ;
For all the organs of our frame will be
Form'd to sustain whatever gives delight.

ATOMS.

E'EN so on earth, oft atoms do we see,
Twisted or straight, these swift, and others slow,
Some long, some short, of all variety,
Sport in the sunbeam.

A LYRE.

AND as a lyre, attuned throughout its chords
Unto the harp, a pleasing harmony
To one unknowing of the art affords,
So from the radiant lustre there appearing
Ran through the Cross a gathering melody,
Which ravish'd me, although the hymn scarce
hearing.

BENEVOLENCE.

THAT will benevolent, which ever flows
From heart wherein true charity abounds—
As selfish love a will malignant shows—
Now still'd the lyre of that melodious band,
And made the chords to cease their holy sounds—
Those chords relax'd or braced by Heaven's right
hand.

How shall such spirits to a righteous prayer
Ever be deaf—who that they might to me
Audience afford, together silent were?

Well may he ever grieve, that for the love
Of things which cannot last eternally,
Loses this fervent charity above !

A SHOOTING STAR.

As oft along the pure and tranquil sky
A sudden fire by night is seen to dart,
Attracting forcibly the heedless eye ;—
And seems to be a star that changes place,
Save that no star is lost from out the part
It quits, and that it lasts a moment's space ;—

FLORENCE IN OLDEN TIME.

FLORENCE, confin'd within that ancient wall,
Whence still the chimes at noon and evening sound,
Was sober, modest, and at peace with all.
No chain, no crown had she ;—no dames that drew
Rich sandals on their feet, and clasp'd around
The girdle, brighter than themselves to view.

The father, at his daughter's birth, with fears
Was troubled not, lest she should ask a dower
Too ample, or too early for her years.
No houses then were void of families ;
And no Sardanapalus yet had power
To introduce unseemly novelties.
Nor yet had Florence in her thirst for fame
Eclipsed the structures of imperial Rome—
Swift as she rose, so swiftly doom'd to shame.
Myself have seen Bellincion Berti pace
The street in leathern belt ;—his lady come
Forth from her toilet with unpainted face :—
Have seen, contented in their coats of skin,
The Nerli and the Vecchio ; and beheld
Their wives with joyfulness sit down to spin.
O happy they ! each sure to lay the head
In her own tomb ; and no one yet compell'd
To weep deserted in a lonely bed.
To watch the cradle was the care one chose,
Her child consoling with the self-same word
That hush'd their sires and mothers to repose.

Over the distaff, one the flax would comb,
And tell her family, that wondering heard,
Stories of Troy, of Fiesole and Rome.
As great a marvel had been deem'd, I trow,
A Salterello, or Cianghella then,
As Cincinnatus or Cornelia now.
To such pure life of beauty and repose—
Such faithful citizens—such happy men
The Virgin gave me.

MUTABILITY.

LIKE to yourselves, your works are doom'd to die ;
Although some structure now its end conceals,
Enduring long, while lives are hurried by.
And as the moon, whose orb is never still,
Now veils, and now your spreading shores reveals,
In Florence so doth Fortune work her will.

FLORENCE BEFORE THE DECAY OF HER
NOBLE FAMILIES.

BUT when her days of peace were at an end,
'Twas Florence' doom she should propitiate
The broken bust that doth the bridge defend.
With these and others Florence have I known
In such a tranquil and contented state,
No cause for lamentation could be shown.
With these for her defenders, have I seen
Her people just and glorious, so that ne'er
Stain'd through division had her lily been
With vermeil, or reversed upon the spear.

A SIMILE.

WHENCE, as soft harmony comes o'er the ear
From sweet toned organ, so comes o'er my sight
The time which unto thee approacheth near.

THE MISERY OF EXILE.

'Tis thine to part from all thou lovest best—
From all most cherish'd :—Exile's bow shall send
This self-same arrow first, to pierce thy breast.
'Tis thine to prove what bitter savour bears
The bread of others ;—and how hard to wend
Upward and downward by another's stairs.
But that which shall thy misery complete,
Shall be the foul and ruffian company
Which in this valley thou art doom'd to meet :
For most ungrateful, loathsome, impious—all
Shall set themselves against thee ;—but full nigh
The hour approaches of their destined fall.

LIBERALITY.

HIS looks on thee so kindly shall be cast,
That asking and conceding shall change place ;
And that, wont first to be, 'twixt you be last.

AFFECTION.

AND as sometimes in this our mortal state
We see affection pictured in the eyes,
Of power the soul entire to captivate—
So, in the effulgence of that holy flame
To which I turn'd, an ardent wish I saw
With me a further intercourse to claim.

A FALCON.

Lo, as a falcon, from the hood released,
Uplifts his head, and joyous flaps his wings,
His beauty and his eagerness increased.

HOLY RAPTURE.

SWEET Love, who deck'st thyself with smiles! how
glow'd
Thy rays with fervour in those sparks divine,
Which unto holy thoughts their rapture owed!

THE SYMPATHY OF THE BLESSED.

AND e'en as a good harper twangs the chord
In concert with the singer's voice, that thence
The greater pleasure may the song afford ;—
So, while it spoke, did those two sparks of love
(For I recal their perfect sympathies)
Their flames together with its accents move,
Like the accordant glancing of the eyes.

IMMORTAL BEAUTY.

FOR since my beauty—higher as we rise
Towards the eternal palace—glows more bright
At every step, as witness'd by thine eyes,—
Were not a veil before its radiance cast,
Your mortal vision, dazzled at the sight,
Would shrink as leaves before the lightning blast.

EARTH AS SEEN FROM HEAVEN.

BACK through the seven fold spheres I cast my eyes;
And of this globe as I a survey took,
I smiled, its mean aspect to recognize.
Him who least prizes it I most esteem;
And whoso to the other world his look
Directs, him truly excellent I deem.

WISDOM ANXIOUS TO INSTRUCT HER
CHILDREN.

E'EN as the bird that watching in the nest
Of her sweet brood, the sheltering boughs among,
While all things are enwrap't in night's dark vest;—
Now anxious to behold the looks she loves,
And to find food for her impatient young
(Whence labour grateful to a mother proves)
Forestals the time, high perch'd upon the spray,
And with impassion'd zeal the sun expecting,
Gazes attentive till the break of day;

Thus stood my Lady with a watchful gaze
Upright—her eyes unto that part directing
Where Phœbus his impetuous steeds delays.

THE HOST OF CHRIST TRIUMPHANT.

AND Beatrice exclaim'd : " Behold the host
Of Christ triumphant ; and the plenteous store
Of fruit which these celestial circles boast."
All glowing unto me appear'd her face ;
And eyes so full of joyousness she wore,
Words would in vain their heavenly lustre trace.
As when the moon is at the full and clear,
Diana smiles the eternal nymphs among,
Who paint the heavens through every part—so here
I saw high o'er ten thousand Lamps divine
A single Sun, that lit up all the throng,
As doth our sun the stars that round him shine :
And with such clearness through the living light
Shone the translucent Substance on mine eyes,
That they refused to endure the dazzling sight,

O Beatrice, most sweet and precious guide !
Then she : " The blaze that quells thy faculties
Glows with a virtue nought hath power to hide.
Here is the Wisdom, here the Power, that bade
A way be open'd 'twixt the earth and heaven,—
So long to many an anxious prayer delay'd."

THE LIGHT OF CHRIST IRRADIATING
THE BLESSED.

As by the sun's pure beam, direct convey'd
Through broken cloud, a mead of flowers I've seen
Lit up,—myself the while enwrap't in shade ;
So I beheld full many an orb of light
Shone down upon by rays of brilliant sheen,—
The source of splendour not reveal'd to sight.

BEATRICE ASKS HEAVENLY FOOD
FOR DANTE.

“ O YE, elected to the banquet high,
Of the ever blessed Lamb, whence ye obtain
Food that may every craving satisfy ;
Since of the crumbs that from your table fall
This man through mercy doth a foretaste gain,
Ere death at the appointed season call,
Regard his inexhaustible desires,
And with a little dew assuage them ;—ye
Drink ever of the fount to which he aspires.”
Thus Beatrice—anon these spirits came
Around us in a circle, joyfully,
Darting, like comets, each a living flame.

A KIND RECEPTION.

E’EN as a master, from a servant hearing
Tidings that please—as soon as they are given,
His arms around him casts ;—such kindly bearing

D

Was by the Apostolic light express'd ;
Who, soon as my confessions he had heard,
Thrice, chanting loud, encircled me, and bless'd ;
Such was the pleasure that my speech conferr'd.

A WELCOME.

AND as a virgin, rising joyously,
Enters the dance, bent only on improving
The nuptial welcome—not through vanity ;
So did I witness that attemper'd flame
Draw near the two who in a ring were moving,
As well the ardour of their love became.

SILENCE.

THIS said,—the flaming circle sought repose ;
And with it straight was still'd the melody,
Which from the three in blended sound arose,—
Still'd, like to oars that, dashing through the brine,—
If rest be needed, or if risk arise,
Are all suspended at the steerer's sign.

GRATITUDE TO GOD.

“EVERY incentive that the soul can bind,
And make it turn to God, accordant is
With the warm gratitude that fills my mind :—
The existence of the world,—my being,—and
The death He bore that I might live,—and this
Bright object of our hope, the promised land,—
With the conviction spoken of before,
Have drawn me from the sea of erring love,
And of the true have set me on the shore.
Love for each plant that in the garden grows
Of the Eternal Gardener I prove,
Proportion’d to the goodness He bestows.”
I ceased, when through the heaven resounded
 slowly,
By myriads sung, a strain surpassing sweet,—
My Lady joining—“ Holy, Holy, Holy.”

PRAISE TO GOD.

“GLORY to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost !”
Now throughout Paradise was heard to sound ;
So that my soul in ecstasy was lost.
All that I saw appear'd to me one smile
Caught from the universal world around,—
My eyes and ears inebriate the while.

HEAVEN.

O BLISS ineffable ! O rapture pure !
O life of love and peace ! O wealth, that knows
No wish beyond, unsullied and secure !

BEATRICE.

AND if, or Nature, forms of flesh unfolding—
Or Art, her images of fairest dye—
E'er captive led the souls of those beholding ;

All these collected would appear as nought,
Compared to the delight that met mine eye,
When from her face one smile divine I caught.

AVARICE.

O LUST of gold, by whom is man immersed
To such a depth, that he attempts in vain
To draw his eyes from out thy waves accurst !
Some buds of promise may the will put forth ;
But through continual beating of the rain
The blighted fruit becomes of little worth.
In children only see we faith abound,
And simple innocence ; for both have fled
Ere down upon the youthful cheek be found.

WISDOM CHASING AWAY THE CLOUDS
OF IGNORANCE.

As when the blast of Boreas hath pass'd by,
The atmosphere remains serene and bright,
Gladden'd through all the regions of the sky—

For the dense vapours that were rife ere-while
Are now dispersed ; and heaven in beauty dight
On every side is beaming forth a smile.”—
Such was my joy, what time an answer clear
Vouchsafed my gracious Lady, nought disguising,
And made the truth like star in heaven appear.

THE BEAUTY OF BEATRICE, OR HEAVENLY
WISDOM INDESCRIBABLE.

BEAUTY I saw, transcending human sense
So far, that He who fashion'd it alone
Reaps the full measure of enjoyment thence.
Wishing to paint it, feel I such despair,
That into greater trouble am I thrown
Than tragic bards or comic ever were ;
For as the sun o'erpowers the enfeebled eye,
So, the remembrance of that smile divine
Hath robb'd my soul of every faculty.

From the first day her countenance was seen
By me on earth, until this view was mine,
My raptured song hath ne'er suspended been.
But now 'tis time I set the attempt aside
To trace her beauty in my feeble lays,
As Limner, who his utmost skill hath plied ;
And even so, I leave the theme to those
Whose loftier trumpet may record her praise ;
Bringing this arduous subject to a close.

THE HEAVEN OF LIGHT.

LIGHT intellectual, and full of love !
Love of true bliss, where every joy is known ;
Joy, every other sweetness far above !

THE RIVER OF LIGHT.

LIGHT I beheld, that like a stream was flowing,
All bright with silver rays, two banks between,
In hues of spring most marvellously glowing.

GOD VISIBLE TO THE RIGHTEOUS.

O SPLENDOUR of the Godhead, by whose aid
I saw the triumph of the kingdom true,
Give me the power to tell what I survey'd !
A light there is above, which plainly shows
The great Creator to the creature, who
In seeing Him alone can find repose ;
And in a circle spreads to such degree,
That for the sun would its circumference
A girdle of too great dimensions be.
Its essence one vast ray—reflecting light
Unto a circle far removed, which thence
Derives both its existence and its might.

THE SAINTS REFLECTED IN THE
LIGHT OF GOD.

AND as a cliff looks down upon the bed
Of some clear stream, to see how richly crown'd
With flowers and foliage is its lofty head ;

So, all from earth who hither e'er return'd
Seated on more than thousand thrones around,
Within the Eternal Light themselves discern'd.

DANTE'S ASTONISHMENT AT BEHOLDING
THE IMMORTAL SPIRITS.

If the Barbarians, (coming from that land
O'er which, as round she wheels with her dear son,
Doth Elicē take up her daily stand)
Beholding Rome and all her buildings vast,
When like the Lateran mortal works were none,
Into extreme astonishment were cast ;
I, who from earth to an immortal fane
Had pass'd,—from time into eternity—
From Florence to a people just and sane—
What great astonishment belike was mine !
Surely betwixt amaze and joy did I
To shut my ears, and close my lips incline.
And like a pilgrim who with fond delight
Surveys the temple he has vow'd to see,
And hopes e'en now its wonders to recite ;

So through that living light with searching ken
The varied ranks I view'd repeatedly,
Now up, now down, now round and round again.

AN OLD MAN.

BEAM'D on his cheek and brow, as 't were, a stream
Of joy benign—his look compassionate,
Such as a tender father might beseem.

THE DEITY SEEN IN A VISION.

O SOVRAN Light ! who dost exalt thee high
Above all thoughts that mortals may conceive,
Recal thy semblance to my mental eye ;
And let my tongue record the wondrous story,
That I to nations yet unborn may leave
One spark at least of thy surpassing glory :
So, recollection aiding memory,
And this my verse, resounding forth thy praise,
Shall loftier thoughts be entertain'd of Thee.

I deem the fervour of the living ray
Would have o'erwhelm'd my senses in amaze,
Had I shrunk back, and turn'd mine eyes away :
But bolder, I remember, I became,
Till by degrees my eyes endured the sight,
And reach'd the utmost splendour of the flame.
O plenteous Grace—whence I presumed to cast
A stedfast gaze upon the Eternal Light,
Until the vision, now complete, was past !
Within its depth I saw that by the chains
Of love, in one sole volume was combined
Whate'er the universal world contains ;—
Substance, and accident—their varied shows,
In such a manner all-together join'd,
That as One Light, the whole I speak of glows.

.
Such one becomes, admiring that blest Ray,
That, whatsoever else allure the sight,
Impossible it is to turn away.

PICTURES FROM DANTE.

PURGATORIO.

DANTE'S DELIGHT ON EMERGING FROM HELL.

SWEET colours that with orient sapphire shone,
Collected in the tranquil atmosphere,
Far as the highest circle's purer zone,
Enjoyment to my weary eyes restored,
Soon as I issued from that stagnant air
Which o'er my sight and breast such sorrow
pour'd.

AN OLD MAN.

NEAR me I saw an aged man alone,
Whose look inspired devotion more profound
Than to his father ever owed a son.
His beard was long, and intermix'd with grey,
Which falling with the hoary locks around,
In double tresses on his bosom lay.

DAYBREAK.

Now 'gan the vanquish'd matin hour to flee ;
And seen from far, as onward came the day,
I recognised the trembling of the sea.

A WANDERER.

WE journey'd o'er the solitary plain,
Like one who would retrace his wilder'd way,
And till he finds it, seems to strive in vain.

IMPATIENCE FOR A JOURNEY.

By ocean's shore we still prolong'd our stay,
Like men, who, thinking of a journey near,
Advance in thought, while yet their limbs delay :

THE APPROACH OF AN ANGEL.

See how he spurneth human means—nor oars,
Nor other sail except his wings assumes,
To speed his way between such distant shores.
See how he raises them, to heaven directed,
Fanning the air with those eternal plumes,
Not, like to mortal coil, by change affected.

DANTE AND HIS FRIEND CASELLA.

Among the spirits who are astonished to see Dante, a living being, in the land of spirits, is Casella, an excellent musician, and an intimate friend of the poet. On seeing Dante, he embraces him, when Dante, having vainly endeavoured to

return it, expresses his surprise that Casella, who had been dead some years, was only now arriving in Purgatory. Casella answers, that the will of the Angel, who had denied him an earlier passage, depended on the will of God, and therefore may not be inquired into. On Dante asking him to sing one of his old songs, he begins: "Love that within me speaks,"—not only complying with Dante's request, but selecting one of his own sonnets from the *Convito*.

THE souls who, by my breathing, as they gazed,
Knew I was still alive, all pallid now
Appeared—such marvel in their minds was raised.
To hear the news, e'en as the people press
Around a herald with the olive bough,
Trampling each other in their eagerness ;
So round me all these happy souls repair ;
And lingering still to look upon my face,
Forget the streams that were to make them fair.
Before them one advanced, whom I beheld
So bent on clasping me in his embrace,
That me to like endeavour he impell'd.
O shadows, save in outward aspect, vain !
Three times around his form my hands I threw ;
As oft return'd they to my breast again.

Wonder, I deem, was painted on my face ;
For with a smile the shadow backward drew ;
And I full eagerly pursued its trace.
In gentle tone he bade me to refrain :
Then knew I who he was, and pray'd that he,
To hold some converse with me, would remain.
“ Dear as thou wert to me alive—so dear
Art thou,” he answered me, “ from bondage free ;
Wherefore I pause—but thou, why art thou here ?”
“ This journey, my Casella, have I made
With purpose to retrace my steps again ;
But thy arrival, why so long delay'd ?”
“ No hardship do I suffer,” he replied,
“ If he, who taketh whom he lists, and when,
Hath oft this passage to my prayer denied ;
For of his will is righteous Will the guide.
He in his vessel hath for three months ta'en
All who were anxious to pass o'er the tide :
Whence I (my face directed to the strand
Where Tiber's waters mingle with the main)
Was kindly added to his former band.

And thither now his wings doth he direct ;
For all the souls, not doom'd to join the throng
By Acheron's shore, at Tiber's mouth collect."
Then I : " If here no ordinance annul
Memory or practice of that amorous song,
Erst wont in peace my every wish to lull—
Be pleased therewith to soothe my soul awhile,
Which, journeying hither with its earthly frame,
Is so encumber'd and oppress'd by toil."
' Love that within me speaks,' in accent clear
Forth from his lips anon so sweetly came,
That still its sweetness vibrates on mine ear.
Such full contentment that illustrious sage
And those who were around him testified,
Nought else, it seem'd, their senses could engage.
We all were fix'd in rapture on his song,
Listening attent,—when lo, the old man cried :
" How now, ye lingering souls ? Why here so long ?
Haste,—to the mountain swiftly take the road ;
And let your eyelids from those scales be freed
Which rob you of the presence of your God."

As when, collecting either tare or blade,
The doves, united quietly to feed,
(Awhile their custom'd haughtiness allay'd)
If aught appear that causes them alarm,
All on a sudden quit the loved repast,
Assail'd by greater care and fear of harm ;—
So I beheld the band who join'd us last,
Forsake the song, and speed them to the height,
Like one not knowing whither bound :—so fast
We hasted on, impatient of our flight.

CONSCIENCE.

INWARD remorse appear'd his soul to wring :
O noble conscience, upright and refined,
How slight a fault inflicts a bitter sting !

VALUE OF TIME.

HE who knows most, grieves most for wasted time.

SHEEP.

AND e'en as sheep forth issue from the fold,
By one, by two, by three—while all the rest
Stand timid, and to earth their noses hold ;
And what the leader doth, they also do ;
If chance she stop, behind her closely prest,
Simple and still—not knowing why : e'en so, &c.

MANFRED.

MY sins were horrible, I must aver ;
But such wide arms hath Mercy infinite,
She welcomes every soul that turns to her.
Cosenza's shepherd, by Pope Clement sent
To hunt me down—had he but read aright
This text in Scripture for his guidance lent,
My bones had still their former place possest,
Near Benevento, at the bridge's head,
And, guarded by the mound, had been at rest :

The wind now sweeps them, when the rain hath
drench'd,
Beyond the kingdom, far as Verdë spread,
Whither he bore them, with the torches quench'd.
But their fell curses cannot fix our doom,
Nor stay the eternal Love from His intent,
While hope remaining bears her verdant bloom.

ABSENCE.

WHEN through excess of joy, or misery,
Which any of our faculties enchains,
The soul concentrates all its energy,
It seems no other impulse to obey ;—
And this dispels that error, which maintains
More souls than one light up our mortal clay.
And thus, when aught perchance is heard or seen,
Which strongly to itself attracts the soul,
Time flies, though man perceives not it hath been.

ZEAL.

Down may one go to Noli, or the high
Bismantua climb—San Leo's steep ascend,
With feet alone; but here one needs must fly—
With buoyant wing I mean, and with the plume
Of strong desire, as I his steps attend
Who gave me hope, and lit me through the gloom.

A MOUNTAIN.

THE summit far above man's ken was placed ;
And steeper seem'd its haughty sides to be
Than through mid quadrant line to centre traced.

THE HABIT OF VIRTUE.

“BUT I would gladly learn,—deign thou to teach—
What height we have to ascend ; for higher far
The hill uprises than mine eyes can reach.”

“Such is this mountain’s nature,” he replied,
“That difficult the first steps always are,
But easier, as man scales its lofty side.
Hence, when so pleasant it to thee shall seem,
That the ascending shall as easy be,
As in a boat the gliding down a stream,—
Then wilt thou have attain’d thy journey’s end ;
Then rest from thy fatigue awaiteth thee ;
I say no more ;—on this for truth depend.”

LAZINESS. (BELACQUA).

AND one, who seem’d by weariness oppress’d,
Was sitting with his arms his knees around,
Between them bending down his head to rest.
“Dear lord,” I said, “behold a spirit there,
Who doth comport himself more lazily
Than if e’en Idleness his sister were.”
To us he turn’d,—and gazed with look intent,
Moving his features upward o’er the thigh,
As thus he said:—“Now, brave one, mount the
ascent!”

FIRMNESS.

FOLLOW thou me, nor heed what others say ;—
Be like a tower that stoopeth not its head,
Bellow the tempests fiercely as they may.
He in whose breast springs thought to thought suc-
ceeding,
Of his intent is ever frustrated—
The force of one the other's force impeding.”

PIA ADDRESSES DANTE.

“ AH ! when, to earth restored, thou shalt repose
From all the labours of thy journey long,”
Said a third voice, which gently then arose,
“ Me, who am Pia, to remembrance bring;
Sienna bore me ; and Maremma slew ;—
He who, on marrying me, a golden ring
Placed on my finger, knows that this is true.”

GAMBLERS.

WHEN players from the game of dice depart,
He who hath lost remains of sorrowing mind,
His throws repeating, so to learn the art :—
The crowd pursues the winner of the game ;
One goes before, one twitches him behind ;
One at his side doth old acquaintance claim. —
He stays not ; but to some an ear he lends,
To some a hand :—these instant yield their place ;
And from the crowd he thus himself defends.
Such was my state amid that numerous crew,
As oft on either side I turn'd my face,
And with fair promises from them withdrew.

GRACE.

“O THOU my light ! thy text, it seems, hath given
Denial to the doctrine,” I began,
“That prayers can alter the decrees of Heaven :

Yet such the faith these spirits entertain.
Will all their hopes then prove of no avail?
Or is thy writing not to me made plain?"
"Plain is my writing," straightway he rejoin'd,
"Nor will their cherish'd expectations fail,
If thou consider with a thoughtful mind:
Know, Judgment stoops not from His lofty seat,
Though Love's warm flame in one short moment may
That ransom work these should themselves complete.

SORDELLO THE MANTUAN.

Dante's opinions as to the union of temporal and spiritual power in the person of the Pope, though forming the burden of his song, are never perhaps so strongly and feelingly depicted as in the following episode,—where Dante witnesses the affectionate meeting of Sordello the Mantuan with Virgil his countryman in the world of spirits, and contrasts their patriotic feelings with those of his living fellow citizens. In this ardent apostrophe to his native land, he laments the interference of the Popes, who "should to things divine be given, and let Augustus (i.e. the Emperor) in his saddle sit, if they had heard aright the voice of Heaven." He represents Rome, deserted

by her legitimate Governors, as a lonely Widow mourning the loss of her Cæsar ; and after describing Italy in general as full of tyrants, and torn to pieces by faction, owing to the intrigues of the Pope, apostrophises his own Florence ; and in a strain of bitter irony, comments upon those political and other charges which were ever and anon taking place in his distracted country. Sordello appears sitting alone, when Dante exclaims :

WHAT disdain and pride,
O Lombard soul ! thy countenance bespoke !
Thine eyes, how mov'd they, slow and dignified !
No word the spirit spake, as we stood there,—
Letting us pass—and deigning but a look,
Like to a lion couching in his lair.
Yet Virgil nearer drew, and pray'd him show
The easiest passage up the mountain side.
Nought in reply vouchsafed he to bestow ;
But of our mode of life, and country straight
Enquired ; and when began my gentle guide,
“ Mantua,”—the spirit, so abstracted late,
Sprang tow'rds him from his resting place in haste,
Crying, “ O Mantuan, from thy land am I,
Sordello : ”—one the other then embraced.

Ah, servile Italy ! abode of woe !
Bark without pilot in a stormy sky !
Queen once of fair domains—how fallen low !—
With such warm zeal that noble spirit came,
A welcome to his countryman to pay,
But for the sweet sound of his country's name ;—
While now thy living ones are constant foes,
And each one gnaws the other—even they
Whom the same foss, the self-same walls enclose.
Search, wretched one ! thy sea girt shores around ;
Then inward turn to thy own breast ; and see
If any part in joyous peace be found.
What boots it that Justinian's skill replaced
The bit, if empty now the saddle be ?—
Without it thou had'st been far less disgraced.
Ah ye ! who should to things divine be given,
And let Augustus in his saddle sit,
(If ye had heard aright the voice of Heaven)—
Look how the beast, refusing all command,
For want of spurs obeyeth not the bit,
Since to the bridle ye have put your hand.

O Austrian Albert ! who desertest her,
(Ungovernable now and savage grown)
When most she needed pressing with the spur—
May on thy race Heaven's righteous judgment fall ;
And be it signally and plainly shown,
With terror thy successor to appal !
Since by thy lust yon distant lands to gain,
Thou and thy sire have suffer'd wild to run
What was the garden of thy fair domain.
Come, see the Capulets and Montagues—
Monaldi—Filippeschi, reckless one !
These now in fear—already wretched those.
Come, cruel one ! and see what ills endure
Thy nobles, and avenge their injuries ;
And see if Santafigiore be secure.
Come, and behold thy Rome, how she doth mourn :
A lonely widow, day and night she cries :
“ When will my Cæsar to my arms return ? ”
Come, and behold thy people, how they love !
And if no pity our distress inspire,
Let blushes for thy reputation move.

O Thou whose blood for us redemption earn'd,
Say, (if for me 'tis lawful to enquire)
Are Thy just eyes, indignant, elsewhere turn'd?
Or is it with a view to some good end
Determined in thy counsel's deep abyss,
Beyond what we have power to comprehend—
That full of tyrants is Italia's land ;
And a Marcellus straight accounted is
Each peasant vile that wields a factious brand?
My Florence! well contented may'st thou be
With this digression—thee it toucheth not ;
Thanks to the people who advise for thee !
Many have justice in their hearts ; but long
Delay, through fear, the meditated shot ;—
Thy people have it on the very tongue.
Many refuse the burdens of the state ;—
Thy people answer with officious haste
Ere they are asked : “ I bow me to the weight.”
Then be thou joyful, for good cause hast thou ;—
Thou rich ! thou peaceful ! thou with wisdom graced !
That I speak truth, the facts themselves avow.

Athens and Lacedæmon, who display'd
Such skill in laws, and were so polish'd too,
In social life but slight improvement made,
Compared to thee, who dost such schemes conceive—

The subtle thread lasts not November through,
That in October thou beganst to weave.
How oft, within the time we can retrace,
Hast thou thy customs changed and changed again,
Thy laws, thy coin, and e'en thy very race !
If thou rememberest well, and art not blind,
Thou'lt see thyself like one distraught with pain,
Who on her bed of down no rest can find,
But ever turning, seeks relief in vain.

THE DOUBT.

To him this answer by my guide was given.
Like unto one, who suddenly descries
Something so wondrous, he exclaims anon,
“ It is—it is not:”—e’en in such surprise
Appear’d the shade.

A BEAUTIFUL VALLEY.

PURE gold and silver, Indian wood serene,
Dyes that most gorgeous and refulgent are,
Emerald, when freshly broken it hath been,
Would by the flowers that deck’d this fair recess
Have each in colour been surpass’d as far
As by the greater is excell’d the less.
Her loveliest tints had Nature lavish’d there,
Nor these alone,—but from a thousand sweets
With unknown perfume fill’d the fragrant air.
‘ Salve Regina ’ chaunting, met our eyen
Spirits, who rested on their flowery seats,
By those without this beauteous vale unseen.

EVENING.

It was the hour that wakes regret anew
 In men at sea, and melts the heart to tears,
 The day whereon they bade sweet friends adieu ;—
 And thrills the youthful pilgrim on his way
 With thoughts of love, when from afar he hears
 The vesper bell, that mourns the dying day.*

* The following are the original of this celebrated passage,
 and the translation by Lord Byron.

“ Era già l' ora che volge il disio
 Ai naviganti, e intenerisce il cuore
 Lo di ch' han detto a' dolci amici Addio ;
 E che lo nuovo peregrin d'amore
 Punge, se ode squilla di lontano,
 Che paia 'l giorno pianger che si muore.”

“ Soft hour ! which wakes the wish and melts the heart
 Of those who sail the seas, on the first day
 When they from their sweet friends are torn apart ;
 Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way,
 As the far bell of vesper makes him start,
 Seeming to weep the dying day's return.”

(*Don Juan*, c. iii. st. 108.)

AN ORGAN.

AT the first crash, intent I turn'd to hear,
And voices mingled with the sweetest lay,
Chaunting "Te Deum," burst upon mine ear.
Such rapture did that moving strain inspire,
As when the organ on some holy day
Blends with the voices of the sacred choir,
Which now swell loud and deep, now melting die
away.

THE ANGEL GABRIEL.

THE Angel who glad tidings brought to man
Of that long wept for peace, which open threw
The gates of heaven; and brake the ancient ban,
So sculptured to the full reality,
In sweetest attitude here seem'd to stand,
No silent image he appear'd to be;—

One might have sworn that he was uttering "Hail!"
For she was also imaged here, whose hand
Did turn the key, and with high Love prevail;
And represented these same words in act,
"Behold the handmaid of the Lord"—express,
As clearly as on wax a stamp exact.

THE VANITY OF WORLDLY PRIDE,

O HAUGHTY Christians! wretched, weary race!
Who seeing darkly with the mental eye,
Upon your backward steps reliance place;—
Perceive ye not that grovelling worms ye are,
Born to become the angelic butterfly,
Which, unrestrain'd, to justice doth repair?
Wherefore do ye so loftily aspire?
Insects ye are, made but imperfectly,
Like worms in embryo, not of form entire.

PAIN.

As, to support a roof or ceiling, oft
A figure doth a bracket's place supply,
The knees upgather'd to the breast aloft,
The unreal pain excites compassion true
In him who sees it; such, when I explore
These forms minutely, they appear to view.
They were contracted either more or less,
According to the burden that they bore;
And he who most of patience did possess,
Seem'd, weeping, to exclaim, "I can no more."

WORLDLY FAME.

O THE vain boast of human faculties—
The verdure swiftly fading from on high,
Unless dark ages presently arise!
In painting, Cimabuë thought the field
Was all his own,—now Giotto has the cry,
And bids his predecessor's glory yield.

In letters so, one Guido hath suppress
The other's fame ; and haply he is living,
Destined to chase the twain from out their nest.
Nought but a gust of wind is worldly fame,
Now from this quarter, now from that arriving,
And bearing with each change a different name.
Think'st thou thy glory will be less or more,
Whether thou'dst died among thy toys, or old
Thou shuffle off thy mortal coil, before
A thousand years are past—a shorter space,
If 'gainst eternity its sum be told,
Than wink of eye to orbs of slowest pace ?
He labouring onward there, possess'd a fame
That once throughout all Tuscany resounded ;
Sienna now scarce whispers of his name,
There where he ruled, what time was forced to bow
Florence' fierce rage, her high designs confounded—
Florence, as haughty then, as abject now.
Your fame is like the grass, whose varying hue
Doth come and go—by that same sun destroy'd
From whose warm ray its vigour first it drew.

EXAMPLES OF PRIDE.

As, in memorial of the dead, are seen
Above their earthly tombs engravings rude,
Bearing the trace of what they once have been ;
At sight whereof the tear oft starts anew,
When sad remembrance stings the thoughtful mind
With pangs felt only by the pious few ;—
Such saw I here,—but fairer to behold,
As by the rules of perfect art design'd,
Far as the cornice did the mount unfold.
Him, erst created noblest above all
Created beings, from the height of heaven
Beheld I, on one side, like lightning fall :
On the other, lay, stretch'd ponderous o'er the
ground,
Briareus' form, with shaft celestial riven,
By death's chill hand in icy fetters bound.
There, Thymbra's God, there Pallas, Mars I view'd
In arms around their mighty Father stand—
Eyeing the giant limbs beside them strew'd.

Nimrod I saw beneath his lofty tow'r,
As though confounded—gazing on the band
Who mock'd in Sennaar's plain the Almighty power.
O Niobe, with what o'erflowing eyes
Thee 'mid thy slaughter'd children I survey'd ;
Sev'n on each side the road, in wretched guise !
O Saul, what death-like hue thy features wore—
In Mount Gilboa fall'n upon thy blade !—
That mount by dew or rain ne'er freshen'd more.
There saw I thee, Arachne, foolish one,
Half spider now,—distress—upon the thread
Of that rich work in evil moment spun.
O Rehoboam, not with threatening brow
Appears thy form ; but struck with mortal dread :
Ere foes pursue, a chariot bears thee now.
Alcmæon on the rocky pavement wrought
Appear'd, what time he made his mother rue
The fatal ornaments so dearly bought.
There was depicted how within the fane
Sennacherib's sons their swords upon him drew ;
And how they left him there, so foully slain.

There were the slaughter and the carnage view'd
Which Tomyris made, when she to Cyrus said :
“ For blood thou thirstedst—quench thy thirst with
blood.”

There too was pictured the Assyrians' flight,
When Holophernes, their brave chief, was dead ;
And there the relics of the murderous fight.
Troy I beheld in dust and ruin laid ;—
O haughty Ilion, how wert thou debased,
In woeful plight upon the rock pourtray'd !
What mighty master of his pencil He,
By whom such forms and attitudes were traced
As lofty genius would with wonder see ?
Alive the living—dead appear'd the dead ;—
Nor could reality more clearly show,
Than did the sculpture on that marble bed.
Now swell with pride—pass on with visage high,
Ye sons of Eve ! cast not your looks below,
For fear your evil path ye should descry !

HUMAN FRAILTY.

FEW, few, alas ! obey the gracious call !—
O race of mortals, born to mount on high,
How is it at so slight a breath ye fall ?

A HOAX.

THEN was I like to one who goes along
With something on his head, he knows not what,
But learns from others' nods there's something
wrong ;
Wherefore he lifts his hand to ascertain,
And seeks, and finds ; and thus his hand hath
wrought,
That service which the eye attempts in vain.

BLIND MENDICANTS.

NOT otherwise the blind, in want of bread,
Stand in the churches to implore relief ;
And one against his neighbour rests his head,

The more a stranger's pity to excite,
Not only by the mournful sound of grief,
But by what strikes the heart no less, the sight.

EXPECTATION.

AMID the rest I saw a shade, who in
Her face the marks of expectation show'd:—
“How?”—ask ye?—like one blind, she raised her
chin.

EVIL TIDINGS.

As, at the announcement of impending woe,
The face of him who listens is perplex'd,
In wonder whence will come the threaten'd blow;
So the other soul, who stood in act to hear,
I saw in countenance perturb'd and vex'd,
Soon as these words had fall'n upon his ear.

WORLDLINESS.

HEAVEN calls you, and on every side displays
Its everlasting beauties ; but your eye
Still fixes upon earth its longing gaze.

CHARITY.

BECAUSE your wishes to such objects tend
As are diminish'd if another share,
In envy's full blown sighs they ever end.
But if the love of the celestial sphere
To higher objects had allured your care,
Your breasts would not be troubled by that fear :
For there the more the expression ' our ' we use,
So much more good to each one's lot will fall,
And greater warmth will Charity diffuse.

CHARITY.

THAT Good ineffable which dwells above,
As ray to lucid body swift descends,
So, in unbounded fulness speeds to love.
The warmth it finds, the same it still bestows ;
And wide soe'er as Charity extends,
Beyond it still the eternal Virtue glows.
'The more aspirants are there of the sky,
More good there is to love, and more is loved,
As mirrors by reflection multiply.

THE VIRGIN MOTHER.

THERE in a lofty vision suddenly
Appear'd I rapt ; and lo, a multitude,
Assembled in a temple, met mine eye.
And with a mother's tender look, methought,
A lady cried, who on the threshold stood :
" Why, O my son, hast thou thus with us wrought ?
Behold thy sire and I full many a day
Have sought thee sorrowing."

ST. STEPHEN.

WITH fury then inflamed, I saw a crowd
Stoning a youth ; and as they struck each blow,
“ Away with him, away,” they cried aloud.
I saw him bow his head to earth at last,
Weigh’d down in death by the o’erpowering blows ;
But stedfast still to heaven his eyes he cast,—
In that dread conflict, to the Lord above
Praying for pardon on his ruthless foes,
With gentle look that might to pity move.

DARKNESS.

NOR gloom of hell, nor shade of blackest night,
When not a star illumines the barren heaven,
And clouds of massy darkness block the light,
My face e’er covered with a veil so dense
As did that murky smoke, around us driven,—
Or to the touch, of sharpness so intense.

THE NEW BORN SOUL.

FORTH from His hand, who, ere it see the day,
Views it delighted,—like some infant child,
Weeping and smiling in its sportive way,—
The artless soul springs forth—not knowing aught,
Except to turn to joy, whence it is thrill'd
Spontaneous, by its gladsome Maker taught.

A MIST.

REMEMBER, reader, if thou e'er hast been
Caught in a mist upon an Alpine height,
Through which, but as a mole does through his skin,
Thine eye could pierce—how, when the thick moist
 shroud
Begins to melt away, the solar light
Feebly and faintly penetrates the cloud ;
And swift will thy imagination be
To form a just conception, how the sun
Which now was setting, first appear'd to me.

FANCY.

O. FANCY, in whose chain we oft are bound—
So lost to outward things we take no thought,
Although a thousand trumpets clang around ;
What moves thee, if no impulse sense bestow ?
Light moves thee, in the clime of heaven self-
wrought,
Or by His will who sendeth it below.

A SIMILE.

As when a sudden and o'erpowering light,
Strikes our closed eyes, and breaks upon our sleep,
Quivering a moment ere it takes its flight.

THE MOON.

THE moon, that tardily at midnight came,
Was bidding now the stars to disappear,
In figure like a bucket all in flame.

CIRCE.

“THAT Syren sweet am I
Who charms the wandering sailor on the sea,
Lulling her hearers into ecstasy.
Ulysses from his course I drew astray,
Enamour’d with my song;—who lists to me
But seldom parts—so absolute my sway.”

A FALCON.

AND, as a falcon, which first scans its feet,
Then turns him to the call, and forward flies,
In eagerness to snatch the tempting meat;
E’en so did I.

SINCERITY.

FOR in the wake of passion, smile and tear
So closely follow, that they least allow
The will to govern in the most sincere.

EXAMPLE.

"THAT love which Virtue kindles—so its fire
Shine forth, not idly in the bosom pent,
Is ever wont a kindred flame to inspire."

HASTE.

As pilgrims, eager to pursue their way,
O'ertaking strangers, turn their looks to see;
Yet, as they gaze, speed on without delay!

GOODNESS AND BEAUTY.

(Forese describes Piccarda.)

"MY sister, good and beautiful—which most
I know not—triumphs in Olympus' height,
Bearing her crown amid the joyful host."

A POET.

(Dante speaks.)

AND I replied : " One am I who indite
When love inspires, and as he speaks within,
So, in accordance with his bidding, write."

THE MONTH OF MAY.

As when, announcing the approach of day,
Impregnated with herbs and flowers of spring,
Breathes fresh and redolent the air of May,—
Such was the breeze that gently fann'd my head ;
And I perceived the waving of the wing,
Which all around ambrosial odours shed.

DOUBT.

As the young stork now elevates the wing,
Eager for flight,—now drops it in despair,
'To leave the nest not yet adventuring ;

So I, in whom the wish and fear to enquire
Held sway within my breast alternately,
Was now like one in act to speak, &c.

A RUSTIC.

LIKE to an inexperienced mountain clown,
Who round him throws a dumb and stupid gaze,
When first he visits some well peopled town—
Such was the image that each shade express'd.

DANTE'S MEETING WITH HIS
FRIEND GUIDO.

“GUIDO am I,—allow'd such early grace,
Because I grieved full sorely ere I died.”—
Like to Lycurgus' sons, when in his sadness
They joy'd to see again their mother's face,
So great, though not so manifest, my gladness,

When, utter'd by himself, my father's name
I heard—the father too of those, who e'er
By their sweet love-songs gain'd them higher fame.
Speechless, and hearing nought, I pensive went
Long time—still looking on his features dear ;
Though close approach the burning flames prevent.
And when with gazing I mine eyes had fed,
I offer'd me all prompt to do his will,
With words that might not be discredited.
Then he : “ Thy loving speech hath left such trace
Within my breast, that ne'er can Lethe's rill
Obscure the impression, or its stamp efface.
But, if thy solemn vows believed may be,
Say why thy every look and accent bear
Tokens of love and kindness unto me ? ”
“ The cause,” I said, “ is in your pleasant strains,
Which shall their very characters endear,
Long as the language now in use remains.”

RURAL SIMILES.

LIKE goats that, having o'er the crags pursued
Their wanton sports, now, quiet, pass the time
In ruminating—sated with their food,
Beneath the shade, while glows the sun on high—
Watch'd by the goatherd with unceasing care,
As on his staff he leans with watchful eye :—
And like a shepherd who, the night throughout,
Dwells by his peaceful flock i' th' open air,
Watching lest beasts should put them to the rout ;
Thus on the pavement all we three were lying—
I—like a goat, and like to shepherds they,—
The rock, on either side, a flank supplying.

THE TERRESTRIAL PARADISE.

EAGER that heavenly forest to survey,
Whose living verdure, grateful to the eye,
Temper'd the fervour of the new born day—

Waiting no more, I left the rocky bound,
Over the plain proceeding tardily,
Whose fragrant soil breathed odours all around.
A pleasant air that ever blew the same,
Soft as the impulse of a gentle wind,
With mild impression o'er my forehead came ;
By which the leaves, all trembling as they were
Before the Zephyr, to that side inclined
Where shadows from the mountain first appear.
Yet they were not so bent before the breeze,
But that the little birds in many a throng
Their several arts continued 'mid the trees ;
And, full of gladness, as they pour'd their throats,
Hail'd the sweet hours of prime, those leaves among,
Which kept harmonious murmur with their notes ;
E'en such a murmur, as from bough to bough
Runs through the piny grove on Chiassi's shore,
When Eolus lets loose Sirocco.—Now
With tardy steps had I advanced such space
Within that ancient forest, that no more
The point where I had enter'd could I trace.

And lo, a stream my further course denied,
Which, on the left hand, with its little wave
Bent down the herbage springing at its side.
All waters here on earth, most pure and bright,
Some mixture in them would appear to have,
Compared with this, concealing nought from sight:
And yet it moved in darkness on its way,
Dark, in the depth of that perpetual shade
Which sun nor moon e'er pierced with entering ray.
I check'd my steps, and travell'd with mine eye
Across the rill, to view the trees array'd
In all their fresh and rich variety.
And there appear'd to me (as, sudden brought
To view, some startling object has the power,
Through wonder to divert each other thought)
A lady all alone; who roved about
Singing, as she selected flower from flower,
With which her pathway painted was throughout.
"O beauteous lady, who fully surely art
Irradiate with the fire of love's own beam,
If I may trust those signs that speak the heart,

Be it thy pleasure to approach so near,"
I thus address'd her, " towards this pleasant stream,
That I the purport of thy song may hear.
Fair Proserpine thou to my mind dost bring,
And that most beauteous meadow where she roved,
When, by her mother lost, she lost the spring."
Like to a lady turning in the dance,
Foot before foot from earth so slightly moved
That scarce perceptible is her advance ;—
So 'mid those flow'rets of the richest dyes,
Crimson and gold, to me she turn'd around,
Like virgin fair who veils her modest eyes,
And by her presence satisfied my prayer,—
Approaching me so near, that with the sound,
I caught the meaning of her heavenly air.

THE SAME.

THE Good Supreme, who in himself alone
Delighteth, made man good, and gave this place
A pledge of endless peace :—the fault his own,

If in such blessed realm his stay was short,—
Choosing a life of sorrow and disgrace
Instead of virtuous smiles and gladsome sport.

THE SAME.

THE bards whose fabling verse in ancient time
Painted the age of gold, the state of bliss,
Dreamt in Parnassus of this heavenly clime:
For here man's race was innocent ;—here spring
Perpetual blooms, with every fruit,—and this
The nectar of whose praise all poets sing,

ADDRESS TO THE MUSES.

O HOLY Virgins, for your sake if I
Have ever suffer'd hunger, watching, cold,
Now grant your aid in my necessity.
Through me let Helicon pour her springs;
And may Urania's choir divine unfold
Verse suited to my high imaginings.

BEATRICE, OR HEAVENLY WISDOM.

She appears, to guide Dante through Paradise, on the departure of Virgil, and reproaches him for his neglect.

At the last summons as the just shall rise
Each from his cavern, and, with voice again
Endued, sing Hallelujahs ;—in like guise,
Obedient to such holy mandate given,
On the celestial chariot sprang amain
A hundred angel ministers of heaven.
“O blessed thou who comest,” they all cried ;
“ Scatter we lilies with unsparing hand ;”
And flowers the while they threw on every side.
Erewhile the eastern regions have I seen
At day-break glow with roseate colours, and
The expanse beside all beauteous and serene ;
The sun’s face too, so shrouded at its rise,
And temper’d by the mists which overhung,
That I could gaze on it with stedfast eyes ;—
E’en so, encompass’d in a cloud of flowers,
Which upward by angelic hands were flung,
And all about the chariot fell in showers—

In veil of white, with olive chaplet bound,
A Maid appear'd, beneath a mantle green,
With hue of living flame enrobed around.
And now my spirit (which for many a day
Unused to feel her presence, had not been
O'ermaster'd by sensations of dismay)
Felt, though she was not fully manifest,
(Such secret virtue from her person flow'd)
How strong the love that erst my soul possess'd.
Soon as mine eye perceived that glorious ray,
With which in former times my bosom glow'd,
Ere boyhood yet had wholly pass'd away.
I turn'd unto the left,—e'en like a child,
That to its mother runs with panting breast,
When hurt, or into dangerous path beguiled—
To say to Virgil: "Flows not through my frame
One drop of blood that trembles not:—confest
Are all the traces of my ancient flame."
But Virgil now had vanish'd from my side—
Virgil—my father, most revered, most dear—
Virgil—on whom for safety I relied.

Nor could the sight of all in evil hour
Lost by our primal mother, check the tear,
Which o'er my cheeks now flow'd in ample shower,
"Dante weep not that Virgil leaves thee here—
Weep not as yet; for know, another sword
Of sharper edge shall cause thee many a tear."
E'en as an Admiral with searching ken
Inspects his vessels when he comes aboard,
And by his looks encourages his men;
So on the left of the celestial car
(When at the sound of mine own name I turn'd,
Which here I am compell'd to register)
The Lady, whom beneath a drapery
Of flowers angelical I late discern'd,
Cast from beyond the stream her eyes on me;
Although the veil that from her brow descended,
Girt by Minerva's leaf around her head,
From clearer view her beauteous form defended.
With regal air, and look, wherein disdain
Was pictured still, proceeding thus, she said
(Like one who doth her bitterest taunt retain):

“ Yes, I am Beatrice; regard me well :—
And hast thou deign'd at last to ascend the mount,
Where joys unspeakable for ever dwell ?”
In the clear water fell mine eyesight now ;—
But, imaged there, I drew me from the fount ;
Shame so oppressive settled on my brow.
And as the mother to the son appears
Haughty—thus haughty she appear'd to me ;
Since sharp the flavour harsh compassion bears.
She ceased : when sudden the angelic throng
Chaunted ; “ My hope, O Lord, hath been in thee ;”
But with “ my feet ” concluded they their song.
As snow congeals upon the living masts.
Along Italia's ridge, when blown upon :
And harden'd by the strong Slavonian blasts—
Then, melts into its former self once more,
Like wax before a flame dissolved anon,
When breathes the gale from Afric's ardent shore ;
Thus stood I, unrelieved by sighs or tears,
Till came the notes of those unto mine aid,
Who sing in concert with the eternal spheres.

But when I heard in their sweet measures flow
More pity than if even they had said :
“ Wherefore, O lady, dost thou grieve him so ?”
The ice with which my heart was girt around
Dissolved ; and gushing forth from out my breast,
In sighs and tears a painful passage found.

THE SAME.

FEAR and confusion, mixt together, drew
Forth from my lips an answering “ yes,” so faint,
That to perceive it, sight was needed too.
As breaks a bow before the arrow flies,
When both the wood and cord are overbent,
And to the mark the shaft more feebly hies ;
Beneath this heavy burden so I quail’d,
Pouring forth sighs and tears, a bitter flood ;
And, ere the words had reach’d my lips, they fail’d.
Whence she resumed : “ To thwart those high desires
Instill’d by me, which bade thee love that Good,
Noblest to which the soul of man aspires—

What interposing trenches did'st thou find,
What chains,—that thus, deprived of liberty,
All hope of further progress was resign'd?
And what attraction, what advantages
In other foreheads were perceived by thee,
That taught thee those to choose instead of these ? ”
After the drawing of a bitter sigh
My lips with difficulty answer made,
And scarce had power to fashion a reply.
Weeping, I said : “ My steps were turn'd aside
By the false pleasure present things display'd,
Soon as your face was to my view denied.”
“ Had'st thou been silent, or refused to own
Thy fault,” she said, “ it had not 'scaped our ken ;
By One omniscient the offence is known.
When tears however, gushing forth, allege
Self-accusation by a sinner ; then
In this our court the wheel rebates the edge :
But that more shame may expiate thy crime,
And with more strength thy soul may be endued,
Thrill'd by the Syren's voice another time,—

Dismiss the source of tears, and hear from me,
How wholly contrary the effect that should
At my departure have been wrought in thee:
No lure to equal those fair limbs of mine,
Now unto dust return'd, did ever Art
Or Nature, to attract thine eyes, design :
And if with charm of such supreme delight
Thy doom it was, when I was dead, to part,
What mortal thing should have allured thy sight?
At the first shaft that struck thee from the bow
Of treacherous things, thou should'st have soar'd
above,

Pursuing me, not frail, as when below.
Became thee not to stoop thy pinion down
To wait fresh snares—some youthful maiden's love,
Or other vanity, as quickly gone.
These, the young bird may twice or thrice forget ;
But in the view of those full-plumed, his aim
The fowler takes in vain, or spreads his net."

PICTURES FROM DANTE.

INFERNO.

HESITATION.

AND like to one who swerves from his intent,
Changing his purpose as fresh thoughts succeed,
Till his original design is spent;
E'en such became I on that gloomy coast ;
So that my enterprise, commenced with speed,
Amid a crowd of idle thoughts was lost.

ZEAL.

NOT with such haste do men on earth arise
To shun misfortune, or to compass gains,—
As I, acquainted with his miseries,

H

Descended from the blest angelic choir,
Confiding in thy sweet persuasive strains,
Which honour thee, and all who thee admire.

REASSURANCE.

As flow'rets, bent and closed by chilling night—
Soon as the sun his radiance hath bestow'd,
Rise on their stems,—and opening—hail the light :
Thus to my wearied breast fresh vigour ran ;
And o'er my heart such goodly courage flow'd,
Like one restored to freedom, I began.

INSCRIPTION OVER THE GATE OF HELL.

“ THROUGH me ye enter the abode of woe :
Through me to endless sorrow are ye brought :
Through me amid the souls accurst ye go.

Justice did first my lofty Maker move :
By Power Almighty was my fabric wrought,
By highest Wisdom, and by primal Love.
Ere I was form'd, no things created were,
Save those eternal—I eternal last :
All hope abandon—ye who enter here.”

DESCRIPTION OF HELL.

THERE sobs, and wailings, and heart-rending cries
Resounded through the starless atmosphere,
Whence tears began to gather in mine eyes.
Harsh tongues discordant—horrible discourse—
Words of despair—fierce accents of despite—
Striking of hands—with curses deep and hoarse,
Raised a loud tumult, which unceasing whirl'd
Throughout that gloom of everlasting night,
Like to the sand by circling eddies hurl'd.

THE NEUTRALS.

HERE with those caitiff angels they abide,
Who stood aloof in heaven—to God untrue,
Yet wanting courage with his foes to side.
Heaven drove them forth, its beauty not to stain :
And Hell refuses to receive them too :—
From them no glory could the damn'd obtain.

.
Fame is on earth denied this wretched class,
Alike by Justice and by Pity spurn'd :
Speak we no more of them—but look—and pass.

CHARON.

Lo ! in a vessel o'er the gloomy tide
An old man comes—his locks all white with age :—
“ Woe, woe to you, ye guilty souls !” he cried,
“ Hope not that heaven shall ever bless your sight ;
I come to bear you to the other shore,—
To ice, and fire, in realms of endless night.”

.
 THE dark lake's pilot heard ;—and at the sound
 Fell instant his rough cheeks, while flashing ranged
 His angry eyes in flaming circles round.
 But they—soon as these threatenings met their ear—
 Poor, naked, weary souls—their colour changed,
 And chattered e'en their teeth through very fear.

THE FALL OF THE LEAF.

As leaves in autumn, borne before the wind,
 Drop one by one, until the naked branch
 Sees all its honours to the earth consign'd ;
 So from that coast, at his dread summons, all
 The guilty race of Adam downward launch,
 Each as a bird attracted by the call.

THE VALE OF WOE.

BENEATH me lay forsooth, the Vale of Woe,
In whose abyss eternal groans unite,
And blend their thunders in the depth below.
Obscure it was,—so cloudy—deep—and dense,
That though to pierce the gloom I strain'd my sight,
Nought could I see within the gulf immense.

.
No wailings there were audible,—the sound
Of sighs alone was heard—convulsive sighs,
That made the eternal air to tremble round.

THE JUDGE OF HELL.

CROWDS ever stand before him, doom'd to woe ;
All in succession to the judge repair ;
They speak—they hear—and then are hurled below.

HELL.

Throughout the place speaks not the light of heaven ;
And the vast region bellows loud and deep,
As when o'er ocean warring winds are driven.

FRANCESCA DA RIMINI.

Greatly as this passage is admired, still, from the custom of considering it as a mere episode, unconnected with the context, many persons are labouring under a false impression as to the moral of the tale. And this prejudice against Dante is aggravated by the warm colouring which succeeding Translators have laid upon the picture. Moreover, being the passage which critics invariably fly to, as the test of Translators, it has been so repeatedly brought before the public, that the erroneous impression has been the more extended.

Now, if the context be considered, the story is given as an instance of the sufferings undergone by those who give way to their passions, and is introduced by a description the most sorrowful that can be conceived.

Dante, at a distance, hears "the melancholy sound of those who weep ;" and this increases on his approach, till "sharpest lamentations strike his ear." Throughout the place speaks not the light of heaven ; and the blast of hell is irresistibly hurrying along the miserable spirits. After seeing Semiramis, Cleopatra, and others, Dante is struck by the manner in which two spirits, who accompany each other, are swept along together before the impetuous blast, which is at once the emblem

and punishment of their crime. During a short respite, while the wind is still, Dante addresses these "wearied spirits." Invoked in the name of that love, which had brought them into hell, and still maintains its power over them, amid their everlasting torments, they obey his call. Francesca having told a portion of her tale, Dante weeps at the recital. She then mourns over the remembrance of lost happiness, as the deepest of afflictions, and continues her sad history,—extenuating her guilt so far only as to tell us that it was not premeditated; while Paolo, who stands by, moans so bitterly, that Dante is entirely overcome by compassion.

Pity indeed may well be excited by the relation of human frailty, and human suffering;—nor does a word escape the poet that is calculated to excite any other feelings than those of sympathy with these wretched spirits, whose undying love is but an aggravation of their sufferings, in the reflection that they have ruined one another, and, as Francesca mournfully intimates, alienated themselves from the favour of God for ever.

The facts of the case certainly in some degree extenuate Francesca's guilt. "Guido engaged to give his daughter in marriage to Lanciotto, the eldest son of his enemy, the master of Rimini. Lanciotto, who, hideously deformed in countenance and figure, foresaw that if he presented himself in person, he should be rejected by the lady. He therefore resolved to marry her by proxy, and sent as his representative his youngest brother, Paolo, the handsomest and most accomplished man in all Italy. Francesca saw Paolo arrive, and imagined she beheld her future husband. That mistake was the commencement of her passion."—*Boccaccio*. But Dante pleads not this excuse. Nor is Divine justice weighed down in the scales by human frailty. Tender hearted as the poet was, he allows not his sympathy

for the afflicted to overcome his zeal for truth, or in the least to countenance immorality, which he so constantly and earnestly denounces. So chaste are Dante's touches in this exquisitely finished picture, that few persons are perhaps capable of appreciating its extreme delicacy. And if, after all the endeavours which have been made to render this celebrated passage, (from Charles Rogers, the first translator, to Lord Byron, and Lord John Russell, the last,) it must be considered untranslatable, let not the difficulties we encounter, rob Dante of his deserved praise, but rather excite all to seek truth and nature in the pure and simple language of the original.

THE infernal blast, unceasing in its course,
Hurries along the miserable crowd,
Whirling and tossing with resistless force.
When they arrive before the brink extreme,
There, shrieks are heard, complaint, and wailing
 loud ;
There, the Almighty spirit they blaspheme.
Torments like these, I learnt, were here assign'd
To carnal sinners, who to appetite
Subject the nobler faculty of mind.
As starlings, ere the winter, in a vast
Innumerable squadron wheel their flight ;
So, ever and anon, this sweeping blast,

Now up—now down,—this way, and that again
 Impels the wicked souls:—no comfort springs
 From hope of rest, or e'en of lessen'd pain.
 As chaunting forth their melancholy lay
 The clamorous cranes are borne upon their wings,
 High marshalling in air their long array;—
 Repeating thus their lamentable song,
 Afflicted souls approaching I beheld,
 Swept by the dreadful hurricane along.

.

“Gladly would I address, O bard,” I cried,
 “Yon pair who move together, and appear
 So light before the sweeping wind to glide?”
 He answer'd me: “When they approach this way,
 Invoke them by that love which brings them here,
 And they will readily thy call obey.”

Io cominciai : Poeta, volentieri
 Parlerei a que' duo che 'nsieme vanno,
 E paion sì al vento esser leggieri.
 Ed egli a me : Vedrai quando saranno
 Più presso a noi ; e tu allor li prega
 Per quell' amor ch' ei mena ; e quei verranno.

Soon as the hurricane had brought them nigh,
 I raise my voice: "Come, O ye souls distrest,
 And speak with us, unless High power deny."
 As doves, by strong affection urged, repair
 With firm expanded wings to their sweet nest,
 Borne by the impulse of their will through air:
 E'en thus from Dido's band these two were seen
 Swift gliding tow'rds us through that region drear;
 So urgent the impassion'd cry had been.
 "O Thou still living mortal, kind and good,
 That wendest through the lurid atmosphere,
 To visit us, who stain'd the earth with blood,—

Sì tosto come 'l vento a noi li piega
 Muovo la voce: O anime affannate,
 Venite a noi parlar, s' altri nol niega.
 Quali colombe dal disio chiamate
 Con l' ali aperte e ferme al dolce nido
 Volan, per l' aer dal voler portate;
 Cotali uscìr della schiera ov' è Dido,
 Venendo a noi per l' aer maligno;
 Sì forte fu l' affettuoso grido.
 O animal grazioso e benigno,
 Che visitando vai per l' aer perso
 Noi che tignemmo 'l mondo di sanguigno!

Were He who rules the universe our friend,
Peace at his hands for thee our prayers would seek,
Since thou hast pity for our hapless end.
To hear or speak—whichever be thy will—
Tell us; and we will hear thee, or will speak,
While e'en as now, the cutting wind is still.
My native place is seated on the coast,
Where Po rolls down his waters to the sea,
To blend in peace his tributary host.
Love, that to noble heart is quickly taught,
Enamour'd *him* of that fair form—from me
So rudely torn,—there's anguish in the thought.

Se fosse amico il re dell' universo,
Noi pregheremmo lui per la tua pace,
Da ch'hai pietà del nostro mal perverso.
Di quel ch' udire e che parlar ti piace
Noi udiremo e parleremo a vui,
Mentre ch'è 'l vento, come fa, si tace.
Siede la terra, dove nata fui,
Su la marina dove 'l Po discende
Per aver pace co' seguaci sui.
Amor; ch' al cor gentil ratto s'apprende,
Prese costui della bella persona,
Che mi fu tolta, e 'l modo ancor m' offende.

Love, that permits no loved one not to love,
 So ravish'd me in being dear to him,
 That, as thou see'st, e'en now its force I prove.
 Love caused us both to share one common tomb :
 Hell's lowest depth—Caina, dark and dim—
 Awaits our murderer : ” thus she told their doom.
 Soon as I heard their tale, my head I bent,
 Nor from the ground my drooping eyes retire,
 Till cried the bard : “ On what art thou intent ? ”
 When I could answer him, “ Alas ! ” I said,
 “ How sweet the thoughts—how ardent the desire
 That to the mournful step these lovers led ! ”

Amor, ch' al nullo amato amar perdona,
 Mi prese del costui piacer sì forte
 Che, come vedi, ancor non m' abbandona.
 Amor condusse noi ad una morte :
 Caina attende chi vita ci spense.
 Queste parole da lor ci fur porte.
 Da ch' io 'ntesi quell' anime offense
 Chinai 'l viso, e tanto 'l tenni basso,
 Fin che 'l Poeta mi disse : che pense ?
 Quando risposi, cominciai : O lasso !
 Quanti dolci pensier, quanto desio
 Menò costoro al doloroso passo !

Then as I turn'd to them, these words I spake :
"Thy agonies, Francesca, make mine eyes
O'erflow with tears—such pity they awake.
But tell me how, and by what sign confest
Did Love reveal, in that sweet time of sighs,
The doubtful passion struggling in each breast?"
Then she to me : "There is no greater woe,
Than to remember days of happiness
Amid affliction;—this thy guide doth know.
But if how love did first our hearts beguile
Thou fain wouldst hear, I will the truth confess,
As one who tells her tale, and weeps the while.—

Poi mi rivolsi a loro e parlai io ;
E cominciai ; Francesca, i tuoi martiri
A lagrimar mi fanno tristo e pio.
Ma dimmi ; al tempo de' dolci sospiri
A che e come concedette amore
Che conosceste i dubbiosi desiri ?
Ed ella a me : Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria ; e ciò sa 'l tuo Dottore.
Ma se a conoscer la prima radice
Del nostro amor tu hai cotanto affetto,
Farò come colui che piange e dice.

One day, it chanced, for pastime we were reading
How Lancelot to love became a prey ;
Alone we were—of evil all unheeding.
Our eyes oft met, as we that tale pursued ;
And from our cheeks the colour died away ;
But in one instant were our hearts subdued :
For when we read of him so deep in love,
Kissing at last the smile long time desired,
Then he, who from my side will ne'er remove,
My lips, all trembling, kiss'd :—well may I say
That book was Galeot—Galeot he who fired
Its baneful page :—we read no more that day.”

Noi leggevamo un giorno per diletto
Di Lancilotto, come amor lo strinse :
Soli eravamo, e senza alcun sospetto.
Per più fiate gli occhi ci sospinse
Quella lettura, e scolorocci 'l viso :
Ma solo un punto fu quel che ci vinse.
Quando leggemmo il disiato riso
Esser baciato da cotanto amante
Questi, che mai da me non fia diviso,
La bocca mi baciò tutto tremante.
Galeotto fu il libro e chi lo scrisse :
Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante.

While thus one spoke, such tears the other shed,
That Pity seem'd my faculties to quell;
And reft of sense, like one already dead,
As falls a lifeless body, so I fell.

Mentre che l' uno spirto questo disse,
L' altro piangeva sì che di pietade
Io venni meno, come s' io morisse,
E caddi, come corpo morto cade.

THE RESURRECTION.

EACH soul shall then regain its mournful tomb;
Each shall its flesh and pristine form resume,
And hear pronounced the everlasting doom.

FORTUNE.

Now see the gifts to Fortune's care consign'd;—
How swift, my son, how variable their gale,—
Sought with such anxious labour by mankind:
For all the gold that is beneath the moon,
Or all that ever was, could not avail
These weary souls, nor purchase rest for one.

“Tell me,” I said, “O master if thou may’st,—
This Fortune, that thou speak’st of, what is she,
In whose control all worldly goods are placed?”
Then answer’d he: “O creatures weak and blind,
How led astray by ignorance are ye!
Now let my maxims sink into thy mind.—
He, whose transcendent wisdom hath no bound,
Fashion’d the heavens, and gave to them a guide;
Distributing an equal light around,
So that each part to other part might shine:
And thus o’er earthly splendours to preside
A ministering power did he assign,
To deal life’s fleeting goods with varying hand;
And, spite th’ impediments of human skill,
To change from race to race, from land to land:
Hence is it, that the nations fall or rise,
Obedient to her all-controlling will,
Who, like a snake, conceal’d in herbage lies.
In vain ’gainst her your earthly wisdom vies;
With foresight and with judgment she maintains
Her destined sway, like other Deities.

Her changes have no rest—for ever new :
To speed her on, Necessity constrains ;
And hence vicissitudes so oft ensue.
And she it is, on whose devoted head
Are heap'd such vile reproach and calumny
By those whose praise she rather merited.
But she is blest, and hears not what they say ;
With other primal beings, joyously
She rolls her sphere, exulting on her way.

THE MURMURERS IN THE LAKE OF STYX.

DEEP fix'd in mud, ' Sad were we,' they exclaim,
' There, where the sun sends forth his gladsome ray,
Bearing within a foul and smother'd flame ;
Sad are we now within this filthy lake.'
They gurgle in their throats this dismal lay,
Since utterance more distinct they cannot make.

PHILIPPO ARGENTI.

WHILST we were hurrying o'er the stagnant slime,
One rose before me, smear'd with mud, and cried :

“ Say who art thou who com'st before thy time ? ”

“ I come not to remain :—but who,” quoth I,

“ Art thou who hast thyself so brutified ? ”

“ Lo ! one I am who weeps,” was his reply.

And I to him : “ With weeping and with woe,

Thy fitting company, cursed soul, remain ;—

All muddy though thou art, thy face I know.”

Then to the boat his hands in rage were thrown :

Whereat the master drove him back again,

Exclaiming : “ To the other dogs begone.”

Around my neck his loving arms he flung,

And kiss'd my cheek : “ Indignant soul,” said he,

“ How blest the mother from whose womb you
sprung.

He, when alive, was arrogant, and proud ;

No deed of goodness decks his memory ;

And therefore now his spirit storms aloud.

On earth how many deem themselves great kings,
Who here like swine shall wallow in a sty,
And leave a name that vile remembrance brings !”

ENCOURAGEMENT.

THEN answer'd he—my kind and faithful guide :
“ Fear not, for none a passage can deny,
By One so potent is our strength supplied :
Wait my return, and feed thy heavy sprite
With goodly hope ;—for be assured that I
Will ne'er desert thee in these realms of night.”

A REPULSE.

AGAINST my master's breast our spiteful foe
The portals closed :—shut out—he came away,
And turn'd him back to me, with footsteps slow.
His eyes bent down, and from his brow all trace
Of boldness gone—in sighs he seem'd to say,
“ Who bars my entrance to this doleful place ?”

THE FURIES.

THERE, on a sudden rising up, I view'd
Three hellish Furies :—stain'd with blood they were,
And female seem'd their limbs and attitude ;
Green hydras twined their hideous waists around ;
And serpents and cerastes form'd the hair,
Whose mantling coils their savage temples bound.

A HURRICANE.

O YE, with lofty intellects endow'd,
Behold the secret lore intended here,
Which my mysterious minstrelsy would shroud.
Now o'er the restless waves there came a sound
As of a mighty crashing—fraught with fear,
Which shook both shores throughout the vast pro-
found ;
Like to the raging of a mighty wind,
Which, rushing swift to cool some fervid zone,
Shatters the wood : and sweeping unconfined

Tears off the boughs, beats down, and hurls away ;—
In clouds of dust advances proudly on,
And fills the beasts and shepherds with dismay.

FARINATA.

“TUSCAN, who through this city fraught with fire,
Speaking so modestly, dost wend thy way,—
Here, may it please thee, stay at my desire.
Thy words full clearly make it manifest
Thou art a native of that noble land,
Which I perhaps too sorely did molest :”
Sudden from out a vault, upon mine ear
These accents burst ; whereat I took my stand
Still closer to my master’s side, through fear.
And he exclaim’d : “Turn round ; what would’s’t
thou do ?
Lo Farinata !—upward from the waist
His form behold, apparent to thy view.”

Already on his face my eyesight fell ;
And he uprear'd his forehead and his breast,
As if he felt supreme contempt for Hell.
Towards him, with prompt and animated hand,
My guide among the tombs impell'd me on ;
And said—" Speak clear, that he may understand."
When nearer to the sepulchre I came,
He gazed on me ;—anon in haughty tone
Exclaim'd : " Who were thine ancestors ?" Their
name,

Full anxious to obey did I avow ;
And gladly told him who my fathers were :
Whereat incensed he somewhat raised his brow ;
" To me, and mine, and to my party, erst
So fierce," he said, " the hatred which they bare,
That more than once their forces I dispersed."
" Though vanquish'd, still they fear'd not to return
Each time, from every quarter," I replied,—
" An art thy friends as yet have fail'd to learn."
Then, upward from the chin distinctly seen,
Another shade rose slowly at his side,
Resting himself upon his knees, I ween.

He look'd around me, e'en as if he sought
Another in my company to find ;
But, when he saw how futile was the thought,
Weeping, he said : " If lofty genius be
Of power to lead thee through this prison blind—
Where is my son ? why comes he not with thee ?"
I answer'd him : " I come not here alone :
Lo ! yonder is my faithful escort, whom
Haply thy Guido had disdain'd to own."
Of him already I divined the name,
Both by his words, and his appropriate doom ;
Whence from my lips so full an answer came.
Then on a sudden starting up—he cries,
" Had ! didst thou tell me ?—has he ceased to
live ?—
Doth heaven's sweet light no longer strike his eyes ?"
When he observed a short delay ensue,
Ere I an answer to his speech could give,
Supine he fell, nor more appear'd to view.
But that exalted spirit who had been
Cause of my lingering there, had neither turn'd
His head, nor bow'd his neck, nor changed his mien ;

“And if,” continuing his speech, he said,
“The art thou speak’st of, they so ill have learn’d,
That more torments me than this fiery bed.
But the fair Lady, here who beareth sway,
Not fifty times her silver face shall light,
Ere thou wilt know how much that art doth weigh.
And mayst thou see the beauteous world again,
As thou acquaint me why, my friends to spite,
Such cruel laws your people still retain.”
Then I to him: “The rout and carnage made,
When Arbia’s stream was stain’d with crimson dye,
Tell why such vows are in our temples paid.”
Then said he, sighing as his head he shook;
“In that encounter not alone was I,
Nor without cause such part with others took:
But when assembled numbers had decreed
To sweep fair Florence from the earth away,
My voice alone was raised against the deed.”

THE FIERY SHOWER.

BEFORE us lay a thick and arid sand,
Resembling in appearance that of old
Trodden by Cato and his martial band.
O heavenly Vengeance! how should'st thou be
fear'd

By every one who reads what I unfold,
As to mine eyes distinctly it appear'd !
Of naked spirits many a flock I saw,
Who all most wretchedly bewail'd their fate ;
And each seem'd govern'd by a different law.
Some lay supine upon the heated plain ;
And some, their limbs all drawn together, sate ;
While others never ceased to pace amain.
More numerous far were these who paced around ;
And fewer those who prostrate met their woe ;
But their lament burst forth with louder sound.
O'er all the sandy desert, falling slow,
Were shower'd dilated flakes of fire, like snow
On Alpine summits, when the wind is low.

As Alexander in the glowing lands
Of Eastern Ind, saw solid balls of fire
Descend in showers upon his warrior bands ;
And order'd straight, with provident command,
That each should trample on the vapours dire,
And quench them ere they spread o'er all the sand ;—
Fell thus eternally the fiery rain :
Whence, like to tinder under flint and steel,
The soil was kindled to augment their pain.
In ceaseless motion and perpetual play
Their wretched hands on either side they wheel,
The still descending flames to drive away.

CAPANEUS.

THEN I : “ O master, thou who vanquishest
All who oppose thee, save the fiends I view'd
Fierce at the gate our entrance to contest—
What great one that—on whom the fire-flakes fall
As if he reck'd not :—stern and unsubdued,
As though no tempest could his soul appal ?

Lo, at my words he raised his voice on high,
(For that of him I spoke he knew full well)
“Such as I was in life, in death am I.
Though angry Jove his hardy workman tire,
From whom, that fatal day whereon I fell,
He took the bolt that pierced me in his ire ;
Or though the rest he at the forge upbraid
In Mongibello, wearied all in turn,—
Exclaiming : ‘Haste thee ;—aid ! good Vulcan,
aid !’

As once he cried in the Phlegræan fight—
And though his fiercest shafts my bosom burn,
From sweet revenge he ne’er shall reap delight.”
Then spake my guide with greater vehemence
Than hitherto had e’er been heard by me :
“O, Capaneus, in that thou dost not quench
Thy impious pride, more pangs doth Heaven
assign ;
For, save thy rage, no punishment could be
Fit retribution for a wrath like thine.”

THE FALL OF WATER.

THE murmur of the waters now I heard,
As downward to the neighbouring round they pour ;
And like the hum of bees the noise appear'd.

DISCRETION.

THAT truth which bears the semblance of a lie
Should never pass the lips if possible :—
Though crime be absent—still disgrace is nigh.

A FALCON.

E'EN as a falcon, long upheld in air,
Not seeing lure or bird upon the wing,
(Making the falconer utter in despair,
“ Alas, thou stoop'st !”) fatigued descends from
high,
And whirling quickly round in many a ring,
Far from his master sits—disdainfully.

SUPREME WISDOM.

WISDOM supreme ! how great thy skill, declare
The Heavens—the Earth—and Hell's profound
abode !
How just to each thy dispensations are !

THE SIMONICAL POPES.

WITHOUT each hole a sinner's feet protruded ;
His legs too did the aperture reveal,
Far as the calves ;—the rest from sight excluded.
The soles of every one in flames were wrapt,
Which made the joints so forcibly to play,
That every kind of cord they would have snapt.
E'en as a flame with rapid course doth steal
O'er the smooth surface of its oily prey,—
So glided here the fire from toe to heel.

THE ARSENAL OF VENICE.

As in the arsenal of Venice boils
The adhesive pitch in winter, to repair
The bark disabled by long watery toils ;
For since they cannot put to sea—instead,
One here his vessel builds, another there
Calks that which many voyages hath made ;—
One strikes the prow—one hammers at the poop,
One mends a main—and one a mizen sail,
One shapes an oar—another twists a rope.

LOVE OF MONEY.

AND “No” is quickly turn’d to “Yes” for gold.

A BEGGAR.

WITH such fierce anger and tempestuous roar,
As dogs rush forth on one of squalid looks,
Who begs a pittance at some rich man’s door ;

So from beneath the bridge—enraged and hot
Rush'd on my guide the demons with their hooks ;
But he exclaim'd : “ I charge you, touch me not.”

DOLPHINS.

As dolphins heave their backs above the wave,
Prognosticating angry tempests black—
Signal to mariners their ship to save ;
So, to alleviate th' excessive pain,
From time to time each sinner raised his back ;
But swift as lightning 'twas conceal'd again.

FROGS.

As, in a trench, frogs at the water's side
Sit squatting—with their noses raised on high,
So that their feet and all their bulk they hide ;
Thus upon either hand the sinners stood.

FRIARS.

SILENT, alone, in solitude we went,
The one before, the other close behind,
Like minor friars upon their journey bent.

SYMPATHY.

“WERE I a mirror, not thine outward face
Should I,” he said, more speedily receive,
Than doth my soul thy inward wish embrace.

A MOTHER.

IN haste my leader caught me in his arm,
Like to a mother waked by sudden cries,
Who seeing flames around her—in alarm
Seizes her son, and for his safety caring
More than her own, in but one garment flies,
Nor stops to look—her darling child upbearing.

THE HYPOCRITES.

PACING around with weary steps and slow,
A painted tribe of spirits I survey,
Whose haggard looks express fatigue and woe.
Cloaks had they on, with hoods which downward
fell

Before their eyes, and like to those in kind
Worn by the monks who at Cologne dwell.
Outside—with dazzling gold they glitter'd bright ;
Inside—with ponderous lead were they so lined,
That Frederick's cloaks compared to them were
light :
O cumbersome to all eternity !

THE PEASANT.

IN the new year, when Sol his tresses gay
Dips in Aquarius, and the tardy night
Divides her empire with the lengthening day,—

When o'er the earth the hoar frost pure and bright
Assumes the image of her sister white,
Then quickly melts before the genial light—
The peasant now exhausted his supply,
Rises betimes—looks out—and sees the land
All white around, whereat he strikes his thigh—
Turns back—and grieving—wanders here and there,
Like one disconsolate and at a stand ;
Then issues forth, forgetting his despair,
For lo ! the face of nature he beholds
Changed on a sudden,—takes his crook again,
And drives his flocks to pasture from the folds.
With such alarm the master fill'd my breast,
When I observed his scared and alter'd mien ;
And with such speed the mischief he redrest.

FAME.

“ Now must thou shake off sloth,” my guide began ;
“ For not beneath rich canopies of state,
On beds of down, must Fame be sought by man.”

READY COMPLIANCE.

"My answer is—to do thy will,"—said he ;
"For every modest and sincere demand,
Met by fulfilment, not by words, should be."

FIRE FLIES.

WHAT time the sun least hides his glorious face,
And with his lustre gilds the glowing sky,
When to the gnat the buzzing fly gives place ;—
As many fire-flies as the rustic sees
Down in the vale, where field and vineyard lie,
Whilst on the hill his limbs recline at ease ;
With flames so numerous shone, all gleaming bright,
The eighth abyss.

ELIJAH.

As he, whose wrongs did savage bears resent,
Beheld from earth depart Elijah's car,
By fiery steeds borne up heaven's steep ascent,—

And, as its course he follow'd with his eye,
Nought could perceive except the flame alone,
Ascending like a little cloud on high.

THE EXHORTATION OF ULYSSES.

O'ER the deep waters of the boundless main,
In one lone bark, my course I dauntless ran,
With the few faithful friends that form'd my train.
As far as Spain I either coast descried,
Far as Morocco and Sardinia's shore,
And other isles wash'd by that circling tide.
My friends and I were slow, and full of days,
When we that strait arrive at, where of yore
Did Hercules his warning rocks upraise,
Lest man to pass the barrier dread presume.
Seville was left behind us on our right ;
On the other hand was Ceuta lost in gloom.

“Comrades,” I said, “who now have reach’d the
west,

And won your way through perils infinite,—
Short is the space ere all will be at rest ;
Let each then rouse his drooping energies
That land without inhabitants to find—
Still unexplored, which to the westward lies.
Bear your illustrious origin in view ;
For not to live like brutes were ye design’d,
But knowledge high and virtue to pursue !”

SHIPWRECK.

GREAT was our joy—a joy soon turn’d to woe ;
For, rushing from the land unknown and new
A whirlwind sprang, and with one fearful blow
Thrice drove the vessel and the waters round ;
The poop ascended as the fourth wave rose ;
The prow lay buried in the depth profound ;
And o’er our heads Heaven bade the sea to close.

ABSOLUTION.

NOUGHT but repentance ever can absolve ;—
But to repent, and yet incline to sin,
A contradiction would in terms involve.

HORRORS.

WHO, e'en in language unconstrain'd by rhyme,
Of all the blood and wounds I saw could speak,
Though he described their horrors many a time ?
No tongue forsooth but in the attempt must fail—
Our mind too finite, and our speech too weak
To comprehend the woes I would detail.

THE ASTONISHMENT OF THE SPIRITS TO
SEE A LIVING BEING AMONG THEM.

MORE than a hundred, when they heard the news,
Paused to behold me from the trench profound ;—
In wonderment forgetting all their woes.

CONSCIENCE.

I STOOD, still gazing on the band aloof,
And saw a thing I should have fear, alone
Thus to record, with want of other proof,
Unless my conscience made me feel secure—
That good companion, which makes bold the man
Whose breastplate is—to know his thoughts are pure.

MALEBOLGE'S LAST PIT.

As were the wailings, if—when autumn reigns,
Each lazar house in sad Sardinia's land,
In Valdichiana, and Maremma's plains
Forth in one trench could all their sufferers pour ;
Such here was heard.

A DREAMER.

AND like to one who dreams of miseries,
Which, as he dreams, he hopes may prove a dream,
And longs for that which all the time is his ;—

So I, to whom my tongue its aid refused,
E'en by the wish to palliate what I had done
Had unawares my own offence excused.

A GIANT.

His face as long, and e'en as wide methought,
As at St. Peter's is the brazen pine ;
And in proportion all his limbs were wrought.

CARISENDA.

As Carisenda, view'd by one below,
Seems, when a cloud flies o'er it, to incline
In opposite direction ;—even so
To me appear'd Antæus.

THE LOWEST ABYSS.

HAD I a rhyme so rugged, rough, and hoarse,
As would become the sorrowful abyss,
O'er which the rocky circles wind their course,—

Then with a more appropriate form I might
Endow my vast conceptions;—wanting this,
Not without fear I bring myself to write.
For no light enterprize it is, I deem,
To tell the very lowest depth of all ;
Nor should a childish tongue attempt the theme.

COUNT UGOLINO.

HIS mouth uplifting from the fell repast,
That vengeful sinner wiped it on the hair
Torn from that head all gnaw'd behind :—at last
He thus began ; “Thou bidst me to renew
A grief that overwhelms me with despair,
E'en at the thought, ere I the tale pursue.

“ La hocca sollevò dal fiero pasto
Quel peccator, forbendola a' capelli
Del capo ch' egli avea dietro guasto ;
Poi cominciò: tu vuoi ch' io rinovelli
Disperato dolor che 'l cor mi preme
Già pur pensando, pria ch' io ne favelli.

But if my words may, haply, prove the seed,
Whence infamy shall spring to him I rend,
Then will I speak, though tears my voice impede.
I know not who thou art, nor can divine
How to this nether world thou didst descend;
But from thy speech I judge thee Florentine.
Know then—Count Ugolino was my name;
Archbishop Ruggier this:—now will I say
Why such close fellowship with him I claim.
How by his treacherous designs it fell,
That, trusting in him, I was borne away,
And put to death—there is no need to tell:

Ma se le mie parole esser den seme
Che frutti infamia al traditor ch' io rodo,
Parlare e lagrimar vedrai m' insieme.
Io non so chi tu sie, nè per che modo
Venuto se' quaggiù; ma Fiorentino
Mi sembri veramente quand' io t' odo.
Tu dei saper ch' io fui 'l conte Ugolino,
E questi l' arcivescovo Ruggieri:
Or ti dirò perch' io son tal vicino.
Che per l' effetto de' suoi ma' pensieri,
Fidandomi di lui, io fossi preso
E poscia morto dir non è mestieri;

But that which ne'er could have been heard by thee—
How cruel was my death—will I relate ;
Then shalt thou know if he hath injured me.
Through a small loophole in that dismal cell,
(The ' cell of hunger ' call'd from my sad fate,
And where some other yet is doom'd to dwell)
Full many moons had shed their broken light,
When o'er me came that evil omen'd sleep,
Which all unveil'd the future to my sight.
This traitor seem'd, as huntsman, to pursue
The He-wolf and his young ones to that steep
Which shuts out Lucca from the Pisan's view.

Però quel che non puoi avere inteso,
Cioè come la morte mia fu cruda,
Udirai e saprai se m' ha offeso.
Brieve pertugio dentro dalla muda,
La qual per me ha il titol della fame,
E 'n che conviene ancor ch' altri si chiuda,
M' avea mostrato per lo suo forame
Più lune già, quando io feci 'l mal sonno
Che del futuro mi squarciò il velame.
Questi pareva a me maestro e donno,
Cacciando il lupo e i lupicini al monte
Per che i Pisan veder Lucca non ponno.

Lean hounds, well train'd, and eager for the chase—
The Gualands, with the Sismonds and Lanfrancs,
Before him he let slip :—in little space
The father and his sons, as though forespent,
Lagg'd in the course ; and then their heaving flanks
Methought by those infuriate tusks were rent.
When I awoke, ere morn its rays had shed,
I heard my sons, who with me were confined,
Sob in their slumbers, and cry out for bread.
Full cruel art thou, if thou canst conceive,
Without a tear, what then came o'er my mind !
And if thou grieve not, what can make thee grieve ?

Con cagne magre, studiose e conte
Gualandi con Sismondi e con Lanfranchi
S' avea messi dinanzi dalla fronte.
In picciol corso mi pareano stanchi
Lo padre e i figli, e con l' agute sane
Mi pareo lor veder fender li fianchi.
Quand' io fui desto innanzi la dimane
Pianger senti' fra 'l sonno i miei figliuoli,
Ch' erano meco, e dimandar del pane.
Ben se' crudel, se tu già non ti duoli,
Pensando ciò ch' al mio cor s' annunziava :
E se non piangi, di che pianger suoli ?

They were awake ; and now the hour drew near,
Which had been wont to bring their scant repast,
And each was pondering o'er his dream of fear,—
When from within the dreadful tower I heard
The entrance underneath with nails made fast :—
I gazed upon my boys—nor spake a word.
I wept not, for my heart was turn'd to stone ;—
My children wept ;—and little Anselm cried :
'What ails thee Father ?—strange thy looks are
grown.'

Yet still I wept not—still made no reply
Throughout that day, and all the night beside ;
Until another sun lit up the sky.

Già eran desti, e l' ora s' appressava
Che 'l cibo ne soleva essere addotto,
E per suo sogno ciascun dubitava :
Ed io senti' chiavar l' uscio di sotto
All' orribile torre : ond' io guardai
Nel viso a' miei figliuoli senza far motto.
Io non piangeva, sì dentro impietrai :
Piangevan elli ; ed Anselmuccio mio
Disse : tu guardi sì, padre ; che hai ;
Però non lagrimai, nè rispos' io
Tutto quel giorno, nè la notte appresso
Infìn che l' altro sol nel mondo uscìo.

But, when a faint and broken ray was thrown
Within that dismal dungeon, and I view'd
In their four looks the image of my own,—
Then both my hands through anguish did I bite;
And they, supposing that from want of food
I did so—sudden rais'd themselves upright,
And said: 'O Father, less will be our pain,
If thou wilt feed on us:—thou gav'st us birth;—
Be thine to take this wretched flesh again.'
Then was I calm, lest they the more should grieve.
Two days we all were silent.—Cruel earth!
O wherefore didst thou not beneath us cleave?

Come un poco di raggio si fu messo
Nel doloroso carcere, ed io scòrsi
Per quattro visi il mio aspetto istesso,
Ambo le mani per dolor mi morsi:
E quei, pensando ch' io 'l fessi per voglia
Di manicar, di subito levorsi
E disser: padre, assai ci fia men doglia,
Se tu mangi di noi: tu ne vestisti
Queste misere carni e tu le spoglia.
Quetàmi allor, per non li far più tristi.
Quel dì e l' altro stemmo tutti muti:
Ahi, dura terra, perchè non t' apristi?

To the fourth day had been prolonged our woe,
 When at my feet sank Gaddo on the floor,
 And said : ' O Father ! why no aid bestow ?'
 He died ;—and, as distinct as here I stand,
 I saw the three fall one by one, before
 The sixth day closed ;—then, groping with my hand,
 I felt each wretched corse, for sight had fail'd ;
 Two days I call'd on those who were no more ;
 Then hunger—stronger e'en than grief—prevail'd."
 This said—aside his vengeful eyes were thrown,
 And with his teeth the skull again he tore,
 Fierce as a dog to gnaw the very bone.

Poscia chè fummo al quarto dì venuti
 Gaddo mi si gittò disteso a' piedi,
 Dicendo : padre mio, chè non m' aiuti ?
 Quivi morì ; e, come tu mi vedi,
 Vid' io cascar li tre ad uno ad uno
 Tra 'l quinto dì e 'l sesto : ond' io mi diedi,
 Già cieco, a brancolar sopra ciascuno,
 E due dì li chiamai poi che fur morti ;
 Poscia, più che 'l dolor, potè 'l digiuno.
 • Quand' ebbe detto ciò, con gli occhi torti
 Riprese 'l teschio misero co' denti,
 Che furo all' osso, come d' un can, forti."

LUCIFER.

“ Lo, come the banners of the king of hell !”
My master said : “ then forward stretch thine eye,
And, if thou canst—behold the monarch fell.”
Like to a windmill, in the distance seen
Whirling about, when night enwraps the sky,
Or dense and murky vapours intervene ;—
Such was the structure I now seem’d to view

Above the ice uprear’d his bust on high
The monarch of that region of distress :
And nearer to a giant’s height am I,
Than to his arms are giants :—now compute,
How vast in magnitude the whole must be,
Which to a portion so immense could suit.
If he were beauteous once, as now debased,—
Yet in his pride transgress’d his Sire’s decree,
Well may all evil unto him be traced.

CONCLUSION.

PARAPHRASE OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

“O THOU our Father, who dost dwell in heaven,
Not circumscribed, but through the greater love
To thy first works in those high regions given—
Let every creature magnify thy name ;
And praising Thee enthroned in power above,
Thy wondrous acts with thankful voice proclaim.
O may to us thy kingdom's peace arrive,
For if it come not, sent by Thee below,
With all our efforts fruitlessly we strive.

“O Padre nostro, che ne' cieli stai,
Non circonsritto, ma per più amore,
Ch' a' primi effetti di lassu tu hai,
Laudato fia 'l tuo nome, e l' tuo valore
Da ogni creatura, com' è degno
Di render grazie al tuo alto vapore.
Vegna ver noi la pace del tuo regno,
Che noi ad essa non potem da noi,
S' ella non vien, con tutto nostro 'ngegno.

As Angels sacrifice their will to thine,
Chaunting hosannas in thy courts—e'en so
May man to Thee his every will resign.
Our daily Manna give us day by day ;
If that be wanting,—in this desert rude,
He backward goes, who most would speed his way.
As we forgive the wrongs that we receive
At others' hands—do Thou, benign and good,
Weigh not our imperfections—but, forgive.

Come del suo voler gli Angeli tuoi
Fan sacrificio a te, cantando Osanna,
Così facciano gli uomini de' suoi.
Dà oggi a noi la cotidiana manna,
Sanza la qual per questo aspro deserto
A retro va, chi più di gir s' affanna.
E come noi lo mal, ch' avem sofferto,
Perdoniamo a ciascuno, e tu perdona
Benigno, e non guardare al nostro merto.

FINIS.



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